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POEMS OF THE ENGLISH RACE

JAMES G. HURST

POEMS OF THE ENGLISH RACE

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SELECTED AND EDITED

BY

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PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

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O ye who in eternal youth
Speak with a living and creative flood
This universal English, and do stand
Its breathing book, live worthy of that grand
Heroic utterance—parted, yet a whole,
Far, yet unsevered,—children brave and free
Of the great Mother-tongue, and ye shall be
Lords of an empire wide as Shakespeare's soul,
Sublime as Milton's immemorial theme,
And rich as Chaucer's speech, and fair as Spenser's dream.

SYDNEY DOBELL.

PREFACE

THE aim which has been in view in the making of this anthology is to bring together a body of poems sufficient to introduce the reader to the principal types, forms, and themes of poetry (outside the drama), and to meet all ordinary needs, in this field, of younger readers,—say from the ages of fifteen to twenty,—including not merely their more conscientious reading of the classics, but such free rambling in the poetic realm as they may be tempted to undertake for the joy that is set before them. The chief characteristics of the collection may be summarized briefly:

1. Nothing is included which is not believed to make some natural appeal to the ages indicated. Under this head, however, the editor has in a number of instances put his own judgment in abeyance to make place for practically all poems which are on the list of recommended readings for students in secondary schools.

2. American and British poems have been intermingled, so that—perhaps for the first time—the reader may obtain a conspectus of modern poetry written in the English tongue on both sides of the Atlantic, without disproportioning emphasis on nationality.

3. No poems have been included for the primary purpose of illustrating either the history of literature or the achievements of particular poets; the poem itself, not the period or the author, is the only unit of choice. Yet, since the contents are printed in chronological order, those who seek it will find something like a historical view of the subject.

4. The contents have been divided into two parts: Narrative Poems, and Lyrical and Reflective Poems. The principal object in doing this is to call the reader's attention to the two chief interests to which poems correspond,—the objective or *story* interest, and that concerned with the expression of personal feeling or meditation. Of course there is a difficulty here with such types as the lyrical ballad or the dramatic monologue: "Alexander's Feast" or "Locksley Hall" might quite as properly fall in the first part as the second. But the effort has been to represent, in the classification, the primary effect of the poem.

5. Notes are restricted to matters which require immediate explanation in order to further the intelligent continuous reading of any poem, as distinguished from detailed study; a special effort has been made to furnish introductory notes indicating what the reader should have in mind in beginning the selection. Without disparaging the formal study of appropriate poems, one may question whether it should not be confined to matters

with which the poet himself would wish us to concern ourselves. Tennyson, it will be recalled, viewed with horror the effort to make his poems a means to learning in the schools.

6. The collection includes, in the first place, the classics which the years have culled out as memorable for younger readers from one generation to another, and, in the second place, a selection from recent poetry almost up to the present hour. (The temptation, however, to include poems connected with the late war has been resisted, since it is evidently quite too early to distinguish those of lasting from those of merely temporary significance.) For the former group the editor naturally depends for the most part on the judgment of his betters; for the latter he must assume a responsibility which causes him sometimes to tremble. It is important to represent poetry as *still alive,* engaged with all the experiences and interests of contemporary life, and the later pages of this book will show how it has caught up into its vital embrace the biological, social, and intellectual themes of the age, as well as the great physical achievements represented by the locomotive, the airplane, the Panama Canal, and the American city. But the reader must understand that there has been no effort to make that selective choice from the work of the later poets which the perspective of time makes possible for the older. The recent poems here reprinted are chosen each for its own sake, with no pretence of judging them to be the best of their author, or as likely to be more lasting than others of their time; the reason lies in some specific interest of theme, some hopeful element of youthful appeal, perhaps only in some metrical or other incidental quality which has proved significant either in the class-room or in reading at home. Nothing is more certain than that no two minds would make the same choices, and presumably no one but the editor will read the entire contents; yet it may be claimed with some assurance that every poem will be found worthily significant on one or another ground.

What poetry does youth actually find appealing? This query is likely to occur to anyone who contemplates such a collection as this, and to be answered in accordance with memories of very various kinds. Vividness and movement are of course among the primary qualities from this point of view, as (fortunately) they are among the primary qualities of poetry's essence. Yet one is often astonished to learn what unexpected sources of more reflective interest are found to be valid, for comparatively young readers, in poems apparently beyond their natural reach; of this "Rabbi Ben Ezra" is now a standard example. Sometimes a thought weighs on the immature mind which only the maturest poet has fully expressed; sometimes a half-ripe feeling is found reflected in the deepest poetry, where the reader could not discern it clearly, much less define or explain. Two elements, the ethically didactic and the sentimental, are valued much more highly by youth than by older readers, especially of our own time, as all teachers are aware. The compiler of an anthology will therefore represent them, at their best, more fully than his personal taste would dictate. Indeed, it may be questioned whether the normal taste of young readers is not essentially sound in being more concerned for the substantial values of poetry's thought-content than is approved by much characteristic criticism of the present day.

In this connection the editor has been naturally interested, while collecting his materials, in fugitive memories of the literary passions of his own adolescence. Some of these have found representation in the book; others he has scarcely the courage to justify. Among the memories are these: a devotion to Macaulay's "Horatius," easily explicable, of course, on the narrative side, but including a boyish ardor for the very melody of the opening words, "Lars Porsena of Clusium," and the rest,—an ardor in no wise impaired by a total want of knowledge as to who Lars Porsena might have been or where Clusium might be found; an equally ardent affection for Buchanan Read's "Drifting," which was (and is) so fine a thing to repeat while rowing or sailing on any bay or stream; a strange fascination, still hardly analyzed, for Herrick's little lyric on "Julia's Clothes," which was selected for republication in a certain play-room periodical issued by very youthful printers; a thrilling fondness for Heber's hymn, "The Son of God goes forth to war"—in this instance partly accounted for by a boys' tale of Juliana Ewing's, where it figures as "the tug-of-war hymn"; a consciously ethical admiration for Lowell's "The Present Crisis," and a consciously sentimental appreciation of Longfellow's "Maidenhood"; finally, and in a little later period, when sunsets and such things had become realities, a capture of the senses by Browning's lines telling of the place "where the quiet-colored end of evening smiles." These fragments of personal memory have not been gathered up here, of course, for personal reasons, but as fugitive data for the inductive study of the problem of poetry laying hold of youth. Happy the youth for whom the problem has been happily met! who finds aid in the interpretation of his consciousness with such understanding as only poetry can give,—whose impulses toward the beautiful, toward hero-worship and patriotism, love and religion, are expressed for him by the inherited wisdom of his race as it is enshrined in speech and song. To make this more easy is the highest of the purposes animating this book.

The editor is under great obligation, and takes this occasion to express his gratitude, to the authors and publishers who kindly gave their permission for the reprinting of the following poems:

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Finally, grateful acknowledgement is made of the assistance rendered by the editor's sometime colleague, Mr. Frank Ernest Hill, who not only made for this volume the paraphrase of Chaucer's "Pardoner's Tale," but supplied a great number of the explanatory notes for the poems of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

R. M. A.

Stanford University, California,
March, 1921.

+ = Poems of [illegible]
O = poems of supernatural -
X = imitative ballads -
S = Sensuousness - music + love of beauty
↓ = Poems of Sea -
2 = Heroic theme
? = miscellaneous - Define Dominant qualities
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ABOUT POETRY

I

Poetry might be called the art of recording experiences which are agreeably exciting, in such a way that others may share them and be keyed up to a somewhat similar excitement. The experiences may be those either of the outer life or of the mind and heart; and in themselves they may sometimes seem to be painful rather than agreeable, yet always with some power to call up pleasurable feelings of one kind or another. Prose literature may do the same thing for us, but not so often or so powerfully. It may also be done by mere conversation, but we do not call this an *art,* because it is usually put together in a careless, temporary way, and not intended to give pleasure to anyone after the moment of immediate utterance is past. There is something about poetry, too (or any art), which is less narrowly *personal* than common talk, and which therefore can express one's feelings without attracting undue attention to one's self. Few of us are willing, for example, to exclaim in a company of friends, "Oh, how I love my country!" or to tell that we should be glad to give our lives for a great cause,—not because we do not wish to have it known that we have these feelings, but because we do not care to make our personal emotions conspicuous. But we are willing to join with others, on some patriotic occasion, in singing "My country, 'tis of thee," or

> "As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free";

and at such a time we feel that all the others share in the same high feelings that we have.

This example also helps one to see why poetry is associated with music in being *rhythmical.* There is something about regular rhythm appropriate to the expression of feeling which is deep or lasting enough to be remembered and shared with others. It is easier and more natural to sing one's feelings than to talk them; and it is more agreeable to join in rhythmic movement, like marching in a procession, when some occasion calls for emotional expression, than to walk about at one's ordinary gait. Hence our liking for marching and rhythmic yelling after a football victory or good news in war-time. Even when the feeling is more personal, and not of a character to be shared by the whole community, the same thing is true: if we have undergone a sorrow, a sad song seems to take up our feeling and express it in a way that relieves and comforts us; or if a spring morning is so fine that we feel bursting with the joy of the season, a fast rhythmic walk, with a merry tune whistled as we go, supplies our need in the same way. By a similar process the poet sets his feeling to rhythm, at the same time that he expresses it in words. He says to us, in effect: "Come, get in

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step with me, and share my experience while we move together through these verses. At the end you will feel that it has been worth while." Every poem, then, has a movement to which it is supposed to go; and we should always, in beginning to read it, first feel for the rhythm and start into it with the right swing, as if we were joining in a procession or a dance which someone else had started. Perhaps we may have to run once through the poem for this purpose, too fast to see what it is really about; then, after we have caught the rhythmic movement, we can go back and pick up the ideas more carefully.

Besides using rhythm as a means of getting us to share their feelings, poets make an especially stimulating use of the *imagination*. This is the faculty which brings up mental pictures of sights which we are not actually seeing, and corresponding sensations—in the mind, not the body—of sound, touch, odor, and taste. A vivid sensation of this sort, besides being often very pleasant in itself, has been found to be the most direct and agreeable way of exciting the feelings; therefore the poets, though without having any exclusive right to the process, make constant use of this image-making power. Sometimes the poet chooses a word or phrase because he wishes the reader's imagination to bring up a sight which he (the poet) has seen, with the corresponding feeling that it stirred up; as when Wordsworth (No. 144*) describes a field of wild-flowers as "a host of golden daffodils" *fluttering and dancing* in the breeze, in order to communicate the joy which he had in the experience. Sometimes he brings up a sight which he has never actually seen, but has found pleasure in imagining; as when Arnold (No. 49) describes the region under the sea.

> Where great whales come sailing by,
> Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
> Round the world, for ever and aye.

Sometimes, again, he uses an image to represent a sight or sound not so much for its own sake as for the sake of some idea which it will bring up indirectly. Thus Wordsworth (No. 149) imagines himself as speaking to the poet Milton, and saying, "Thy soul was *like a star*;" and Tennyson (No. 281) describes a boat setting out to sea in a calm sunset, when we know that he wishes to call up the thoughts and feelings connected with a soul passing peacefully through the experience of death.† This kind of

* See the Table of Contents for the numbers of the poems referred to.

† These examples make it clear why the poets are disposed to make large use of "figures of speech." Some of these figures are the most natural means of suggesting a strong feeling in terms of a vivid image. Milton, of course, was not at all "like a star" from most points of view; but the feeling which Wordsworth had for him is shown by his seeing a resemblance between the soul of Milton and a star in at least one aspect. Such a statement of likeness we call a *simile*. If the likeness is not expressly stated, but assumed, we call the figure a *metaphor;* as when Wordsworth (in No. 147) calls the unseen spirit-world "that immortal sea which brought us hither." If the likeness is expressed by representing an object or quality as a living person, we call the figure *personification* (see the "Ode to Duty," No. 145, where the whole poem is developed by means of an image of this kind). The general poetic purpose of all these figures is evidently the same.

imagery is sometimes called *interpretative,* because it is due to the use of the imagination as a means of interpreting something deeper than what stands on the surface of the poem. Poetry which is concerned chiefly with the simpler kinds of imagery—those that exist for the sake of beautiful sights and sounds, interesting actions, and the like, just in themselves—has the giving of pleasure for its only purpose; the poet merely wants others to share some joy that he has experienced. That of the deeper sort, where the imagery interprets ideas, may also give much pleasure, but it has the further purpose of adding to our thoughtful understanding of life; and it may take some little study to get out of it the thinking which the poet has put into it.

It follows from all this that the writer of a poem is absolutely dependent upon the *reader's* imagination to accomplish what he tries to do. He is also dependent upon the reader's acquaintance with the words used, so that they may serve the intended purpose. Keats (in No. 27) speaks of the moonlight that shone through a stained-glass window as making the color of a "warm gules"—choosing the word "gules" instead of some other word for red, because it was a term for one of the colors of heraldry, and the window had heraldic devices painted on the glass. Now it is plain that the reader of the poem must know, in the first place, what color "warm gules" stands for, and in the second place must imagine it vividly with his mind's eye to complete the picture of the scene; otherwise Keats has written the description in vain. From this point of view the reader's imagination may be conceived as a lantern-slide on which are the outlines of a picture that can be seen when illuminated by electricity, and the poet's words as the switch by which the electric current is turned on.

Test, then, the reading of a poem by such questions as these: Am I moving in the swing of the poet's rhythm as I read? Are the words bringing up for me all the mental images which they were intended to suggest? In case the poet seems to be using his images for the purpose of interpreting some idea, am I thinking his thought clearly after him?

II

There are two chief types or kinds of poetry, called Narrative and Lyrical; but in order to make the second class include all that it may be convenient to have it do, we may add another term, and say Lyrical and Reflective.

Narrative poetry tells a story, and the poet in telling it does not usually speak for himself, but stands outside what he is telling and lets it pass like a pageant before our eyes. (If he tells it in the first person, and is really engaged in expressing his own feelings as well as telling the tale, then a lyrical element is mingled with the narrative.) It is clear that this sort of work is often done in prose, as in novels and romances, so that poets have no monopoly of the story-telling art. But if a poet tells the story, instead of a prose writer, it is likely that he wants to do at least one of three things in which the prose writer would not be so much interested: he wishes to *express* the movement of the story more strongly by means of rhythm, or to make its *imagery* more vivid and beautiful than is necessary for the mere story's sake, or to emphasize more strongly the feeling which it is supposed to stir up. A good example of the first reason is Tennyson's "Charge of the Heavy Brigade" (No. 66); of the second, Keats's "Eve of St. Agnes" (No. 27); of the third, Arnold's "Sohrab and Rustum" (No. 50). But many narrative poems exemplify all three.

The principal sub-classes of narrative poetry are (1) the *epic,* a long, serious narrative of heroic achievement, usually connected with the life of a whole people and one or more of their great men; (2) the *metrical romance,* a fairly long narrative of adventure, commonly involving chivalry and love as well as conflict, and making much of private persons rather than national heroes; (3) the *ballad,* a fairly short narrative, in a simple style and form which suggest that it has been or might be sung by a whole company of people; (4) the *tale,* or short story in verse. But there is nothing to limit narrative poetry to these four or any other definite number of types.

Lyrical poetry expresses personal feeling, and the poet appears to speak for himself and for some experience he has undergone (though he may, of course, be only imagining the experience). For reasons explained at the beginning of this essay, this kind of poetry is more closely associated with song that any other, and a pure lyric may always be sung with appropriateness, if any good music is provided for it. In case the *feeling* of the poet is the essential—almost the only—object of the poem, music is really necessary in order to make it seem worth while. An extreme example is such a song as Shakespeare's

It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey and a ho, and a hey nonino!

which no one in his senses would care to *say,* but which can be sung with much pleasure. But if the poet adds a fair amount of *thought* as well as feeling, we can speak or read the poem with pleasure also; and if the thought element becomes very large, we hardly care to sing it. Thus Gray's Elegy (No. 128), though it expresses some of the poet's personal feeling, and is therefore lyrical in considerable degree, is too much elaborated by way of expository thinking to be called a lyric. Such poetry is *reflective* first of all. But often the lyrical and reflective elements are so blended that one need not try to distinguish them.

There is no definite list of sub-classes of lyrical poetry; but we may notice particularly (1) the *song;* (2) the *ode,* an elaborate poem, usually on a subject of more than merely personal interest, which was originally intended for choral music,* but in modern times is highly reflective and intended for reading; (3) the *elegy,* an elaborate and highly serious poem, usually concerned with death and sorrow; (4) the *sonnet,* a reflective poem confined to fourteen lines, in which a single idea or feeling is brought to a definite point of emphasis;* (5) the *dramatic lyric,* in which a song or other lyrical poem is conceived of as being uttered by some particular person in a particular situation. (If this last type is reflectively elaborated, and represents speech rather than song, it is likely to be called a *dramatic monologue.*)

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* A sign of this original musical element remains in the elaborate stanzas or strophes into which many odes are arranged.

In reading narrative poetry, then, the chief thing is to get hold of the *story*—to follow its movement clearly, and see how and why the persons in it act; incidentally, we may expect to have some element of fine feeling communicated to us. But in reading lyrical poetry, the chief thing is to get hold of the *feeling* the poet is expressing—to see how it either remains the same through the whole poem, or changes as it proceeds; incidentally, we may ask from what external experience it arose, and what thoughts it led to in the writer's mind.

III

The rhythm of poetry may be divided into the same principal types as that of music, namely, double, triple, and quadruple, according as we expect two, three, or four notes or syllables to the beat, measure or foot; but with this difference; that in music double rhythm is comparatively rare and quadruple very common indeed, whereas in poetry this is reversed. In both cases, however, we measure the rhythm not by the *number* of notes or syllables, but by the *time* between the principal beats. In music this time-interval is indicated by "bars" or "measures" for the eye; in poetry it is only indicated to the ear by the principal word-accents to which one might beat time. Thus in the line (in No. 25)

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,

it is plain that the syllables "drum," "heard," "fu-," and "note" bear the principal accents and mark the time-intervals. This is triple rhythm, in which we expect three syllables to the beat or foot; but we are not disturbed by the fact that we have only two in the second foot ("Not a drum was heard" instead of "Not a trumpet was heard"), for "drum" is easily pronounced to take as much time as "trumpet," so that the rhythmic time is kept.

When rhythm is arranged, as in poetry, in lines or verses of regular length, it is regarded as being measured into *metre.* If verses in double rhythm regularly begin with the unaccented syllable, they are said to be in *iambic* metre; if with the accented syllable, in *trochaic.* If verses in triple rhythm regularly begin with the unaccented syllable, they are said to be in *anapestic* metre; if with the accented syllable, in *dactylic.* Verses in quadruple rhythm are said to be in *pæonic* metre, whether beginning with or without the accent. A verse ending with the accented syllable is said to have a *masculine* ending; with the unaccented syllable, a *feminine* ending. It is plain that iambic and anapestic metres will regularly have masculine endings, and trochaic and dactylic metres will have feminine endings; but an iambic or anapestic verse may have a feminine ending, owing to an extra light syllable being added at the end, and a trochaic or dactylic verse may have a masculine ending, owing to the omission of the unaccented part of the last foot. (Such trochaic or dactylic verses are called *catalectic* or *truncated.*) We may therefore fully describe a metre, if it is of a normal type, by saying that it is "four-foot iambic," "three-foot anapestic with feminine ending," "five-foot trochaic catalectic," etc. But in some poems (for example, No. 240) the metre varies between dissyllabic and trisyllabic, so that it may be called iambic-anapestic; and in others the lines open variously with accented or unaccented syllables, when it may be called iambic-trochaic (as in Nos. 106 and 107) or dactylic-anapestic (as in No. 267). Again, some poems seem to vary between double and quadruple rhythm, each fourth syllable bearing a principal accent, but with a tendency toward accenting every second syllable also (see No. 80); these metres may be called trochaic-pæonic or iambic-pæonic.

---

* The sonnet usually has a fixed rime-scheme which divides it either into an octave and a sestet (that is, an eight-line and a six-line part) or into three quatrains and a couplet. If we let *a* stand for the first rime sound, *b* for the second, etc., the plan of the sonnet rimes will usually be either *abbaabba,cdecde,* or *abab,cdcd,efef,gg.*

IV

In conclusion, it may be well to ask, What is the advantage of our taking an interest in poetry, apart from the few occasions when it may attract our attention because of some especially striking use to which it is put? The first answer is that the love of poetry is one of the highest forms of pleasure. The love of good pictures is a high form of pleasure, but they do not often have as close a relation to life as poetry, and at their best are rare and expensive. The love of good music is another high form of pleasure, but it is also connected rather slightly with the problems of living, and experience shows that comparatively few persons get far enough into the knowledge of musical forms to enjoy this art at its best. But poetry introduces us to the enjoyment of beauty as swiftly and effectively as pictures and music do; it deals with pleasurable aspects of almost every kind of experience in real life; and anyone who can read can soon acquire the ability to get into the movement and feeling of the work of the very greatest poets, even though all their ideas may not be fully understood.

A second answer has already been suggested. While some poetry exists only for pleasure, most good poetry contains also the interpretation of aspects of life. It does not interpret them in the same way that a school-teacher, a scientist, an editor, or a preacher may do, and cannot take the place of education, science, sociology, or religion; but in the special way by which the *imagination* interprets things, the poet does what no one else can do so well. He accompanies us into all our most thrilling experiences—out-of-door life, patriotism, war, love, sorrow, religion, hope, ambition—and brings out the finest feelings that they involve. He does not have much to say about eating and drinking and clothes and the earning of money, because these experiences are connected with comparatively low levels of feeling; but on the other hand he does not, as some people suppose, keep to a few narrow subjects. He may write about machinery—locomotives and aeroplanes—as well as sunsets and flowers. And he is likely to lead us from the more commonplace and superficial side of whatever he treats of, into its deeper and richer meanings. Consequently, those who become well acquainted with good poetry, and carry much of it in their memory, find it all through their lives a kind of companion—one who not only shares their pleasures and pains sympathetically, but says about each of them the truest and wisest word.

PART ONE

NARRATIVE POEMS

NARRATIVE POEMS

THE PARDONER'S TALE

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

(*Modernized by Frank Ernest Hill*)

[This is the story told by the Pardoner to his companions of the Canterbury pilgrimage. It was not original with Chaucer, but has been found in various medieval versions. A long sermonic passage on the vices of dissipated men is omitted from the paraphrase.]

In Flanders once there dwelt a company
Of youth, that followed foolish revelry,—
As riotous taverns, and their evil fruits,
Wherein with citherns and with harps and lutes
They danced and played at dice both day and night,
And also ate and drank beyond their might,
Whereby, in Satan's temple, did they pay
The devil sacrifice in cursèd way
With frightful and most horrible excess.
Their oaths were great and full of wickedness,
That it was hideous to hear them swear.
Our Lord's own blessed body would they tear[1]
(Too little by the Jews they deemed it rent),
And made each other's sins a merriment.

. . . .

These rioters, of whom I make my rime,
Long ere a single bell had rung for prime,[2]
Had sat them in a tavern for to drink,
And as they sat, they heard a hand-bell clink
Before a body, carried to its grave.
Then called the one of them unto his knave[3]—
"Be off!" he cried, "and truly certify
Whose body 'tis without that passes by,
And see that you report his name aright!"
"Sir," answered him this boy, "'tis needless quite;
For I was told two hours before you came;
He was a fellow of yours, by God's own name!
By night he died, and in a sudden way,
As flat upon his bench, all drunk, he lay.
There came a privy thief—men call him Death—
That in this country all the people slay'th,
And smote his heart asunder with his spear,
And all in silence went his way from here.
During this plague he hath a thousand slain,
And, master, ere ye meet this grisly bane,[4]
It seems to me that it were necessary
To be prepared for such an adversary,—
Be ready for to meet him evermore;
My mother taught me so; I say no more."
"Now by St. Mary," cried the taverner,
"The child speaks true; this year, I will aver,
Woman, and child, and man, in yonder town,
And page and villain,[5] he hath smitten down,—
I trow his habitation must be there.
And it were utmost wisdom to beware
Lest that a man some injury incur.
"Yea, by God's arms," replied this rioter,
"Is he so perilous a knave to meet?
I swear to seek him out by road and street;
Upon the bones of God I make a vow.
Comrades, we three are one,—then hearken now!
Let each of us hold up his hand to th' other,
And each of us become the other's brother;
And we will slay this false betrayer Death,—
He shall be slain, he that so many slay'th,
By God's own dignity, ere it be night!"
Together then these three their troth did plight,
To live and die each of them for the other,
As though each one were born the other's brother.
And in this drunken passion forth they started,
And toward that very village they departed

---

[1] A reference to a particular type of oath, familiar in the Middle Ages, which is exemplified in lines 46 and 49. Compare also line 63.

[2] *prime.* The first period of the church day, nine a.m.

[3] *knave.* Boy, servant.

[4] *bane.* Destroyer.

[5] *villain.* Low-born man.

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Of which the tavern-keeper spoke before.
And then full many a grisly oath they swore,
And rent the Saviour's body, limb for limb,—
Death should be dead, if they discovered him!
When they had traveled hardly half a mile,
Just as they would have crossed a certain stile,
They chanced to meet a poor and aged man.
This old man meekly spoke, and thus began
To greet them: "Sirs, God keep you in His sight!"
Then of these rascals three the proudest wight
Replied, "Now curse you, churl! Whither apace?
And why all wrapped and hidden save your face?
How dare you live so long in Death's defy?"
This old man sought his face with searching eye,
And answered thus: "Because, e'en though I went
To Ind, I could not find a man content,
In city or in village, it is truth,
In change for this my age to give his youth.
So must I have my age in keeping still,
As long a time as it shall be God's will.
Nor Death, alas! he will not have my life;
And thus I walk, my restless heart at strife,
And on the ground, which is my mother's gate,
I knock with anxious staff, both early and late,
And say, 'Beloved mother, let me in!
How am I wasted, flesh and blood and skin;
Alas! when shall my bones be laid to rest?
To be with you I would exchange my chest
That in my room a weary time hath been,
Yea, for a hair-cloth[1] I could wrap me in!'
And yet she will not do me this poor grace;
Wherefore full pale and withered is my face.
But, sirs, ye lack in common courtesy
That to an aged man speak villainy
When he hath neither sinned in word nor deed.
For well in holy writings may ye read,
'Before an aged man, whose hair is gray,
Ye should arise;' and therefore do I say,
To no old man do ye an injury,
As ye yourselves would look for clemency
In your old age, if so ye should abide.
And God be with you, where ye walk or ride;—
I must be off where I have need to go."
"Nay now, old churl! By God, you shall not so!"
Answered another rioter anon;
"You shall not part so lightly, by St. John!
You spoke just now of that same traitor Death
That in this country all our comrades slay'th.
Have here my word: as you're a spy of his,
Abide the worst, or tell us where he is,
By God and by the Holy Sacrament!
For truly, you are one of his assent,[2]
To slay us youthful folk, deceitful thief!"
"Nay, sirs," said he, "if ye can find relief
Only by finding Death, turn down that way;
For in yon grove I left him, sooth to say,
Under a tree, and there he will abide,—
Not for your empty boasting will he hide.
See ye that oak tree? Ye shall find him there.
God, that redeemed mankind, your spirits spare,
And better you!" Thus ended this old man;
And toward the tree these drunken rascals ran
All three, and there, about its roots, they found
Of golden florins, fine and coinèd round,
Almost a full eight bushels, as they thought.
No longer then the traitor Death they sought,
But each was made so happy by the sight
Of all those florins shining fair and bright
That down they sat beside the precious horde.
The worst of them essayed the foremost word:
"Brothers," he said, "take heed of what I say;
My wit is great, although I jest and play!

---

[1] *hair-cloth.* Shroud.

[2] *assent.* Conspiracy.

Fortune hath found it fit to give this treasure
That we may live our lives in lust and pleasure;
Lightly it comes—so shall it speed away!
God's dignity! who would have dreamed to-day
That we should have so good a share of grace?
But could the gold be carried from this place
Home to my house, or else to one of yours,—
For well we know that all this gold is ours—
Then were we in a high felicity!
But such a thing by day might never be;
Men would proclaim us thieves, and do us wrong,—
For our own treasure we might e'en be hung.
This gold must then be carried hence by night,
With secrecy and cautious oversight.
Wherefore I say, let lot among us all
Be drawn, and we will see where it shall fall;
And he that draws the lot, with willing heart
And nimble pace shall to the town depart,
And slyly bring us bread and wine, and we
That still remain shall guard full carefully
This gold; and if our comrade does not tarry,
When it is night we will this treasure carry
Wherever, by agreement, we may list."
Then one held out the lot within his fist,
And bade them draw, and look where it would fall;
And it fell on the youngest of them all,
And toward the town he journeyed forth anon.
And at the very moment he was gone
The one of them thus spoke unto the other:
"Full well you know you are my pledgèd brother;
Your profit will I tell to you anon.
Now our companion, as you know, is gone,
And here is gold, and that great quantity,
That shall be portioned out between us three.
But ne'ertheless, if I could shape it so
That it should be divided 'twixt us two,
Had I not done a comrade's turn by thee?"
The other answered him, "How may that be?
He knows the two of us do guard the gold;
What shall we do? what would you have him told?"
"Shall it be secret?" shrewdly asked the first;
"Then shortly shall the method be rehearsed
Whereby I think to bring it well about."
"Agreed," replied the other; "out of doubt
I will betray you not, as God is true."
"Now," said the first, "you know that we are two,
And two of us are mightier than one.
Watch when he sits, then straightway rise and run
As though to play with him, and I'll devise
To slit him with my dagger as he lies
In struggle with you, thinking it is game;
And see that with your knife you do the same;
And then shall all this gold divided be
'Twixt you, my comrade most beloved, and me.
Then may we sate our joys, and never tire,
And play at dice whenever we desire!"
And thus these rascals two devised a way
To slay the third, as you have heard me say.
This youngest, he that journeyed to the town,
Within his heart rolled often up and down
The beauty of these florins new and bright.
"O Lord!" quoth he, "if it were so I might
Have all this treasure to myself alone,
There lives not any man beneath the throne
Of God, that might exist more merrily
Than I!" And so the fiend, our enemy,
Put in his head that he should poison buy
Wherewith to make his two companions die;
Because the fiend found him in such a state
That he had leave his fall to consummate,
For it was out of doubt his full intent
To slay them both, and never to repent.
So forth he goes—no longer will he tarry—
Unto a town, to an apothecary,

And prayed for poison to exterminate
Some rats, and pole-cats that had robbed of late
His roosts,—and he would venge him, if he might,
On vermin that devourèd him by night.
Then this apothecary, answering:
"God save my soul, but you shall have a thing
That, let a living creature drink or eat
A part no bigger than a grain of wheat,
And he shall die, and that in shorter while
Than you would take to pace a single mile;
Such is the force this poison can command."
This cursed man received into his hand
The poison in a box, and then he ran
Into a nearby street, unto a man,
And from him did he borrow bottles three,
And in the two his poison pourèd he,
But left the third unpoisoned, for his drink;
For he must work all night—so did he think—
Bearing the treasure off with lusty limb.
And when this rioter—bad luck to him!—
Had filled with liquor all his bottles three,
Back to his fellows then resorted he.
What need is there to linger on it more?
For just as they had planned his death before,
So did they slay him now, and that with speed.
Then said the one, when they had done the deed:
"Now let us eat and drink, and make us merry,
And afterwards we will his body bury."
And with that word he took, it came to pass,
One of the bottles where the poison was,
And drank, and gave his comrade drink beside,
From which they both in little season died.
And Avicenna,[1] truly I suppose,
In book nor chapter never did disclose
More signs of poisoning to take one's breath
Than these two wretches had before their death.
Thus these two homicidal villains fell,
And their deceitful poisoner as well.

SIR PATRICK SPENCE

[This ballad is perhaps connected with the story of the shipwreck of a vessel bearing an embassy between Scotland and Norway in 1290.]

The king sits in Dumferling toun,
Drinking the blood-red wine:
"O where will I get guid sailor,
To sail this ship of mine?"

Up and spake an eldern knight,
Sat at the king's right knee:
"Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor
That sails upon the sea."

The king has written a braid[1] letter,
And signed it wi' his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence,
Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick read,
A loud laugh laughéd he;
The next line that Sir Patrick read,
The tear blinded his e'e.

"O wha is this has done this deed,
This ill deed done to me,
To send me out this time o' the year,
To sail upon the sea!

"Make haste, make haste, my merry men all,
Our guid ship sails the morn:"
"O say not so, my master dear,
For I fear a deadly storm.

"Late late yestreen I saw the new moon,
Wi' the auld moon in her arm,
And I fear, I fear, my dear master,
That we will come to harm."

O our Scots nobles were richt laith[2]
To wet their cork-heel'd shoon;
But lang e'er a' the play were played,
Their hats they swam aboon.[3]

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi' their fans into their hand,
Or e'er they see Sir Patrick Spence
Come sailing to the land.
O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi' their gold kems[4] in their hair,
Waiting for their ain dear lords,
For they'll see them na mair.

Half o'er, half o'er to Aberdour,
It's fifty fathom deep,
And there lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
Wi' the Scots lords at his feet.

---

[1] *Avicenna.* A medical authority.

[1] *braid.* Open.
[2] *laith.* Loath.
[3] *aboon.* Above.
[4] *kems.* Combs.

JOHNNIE COCK

Up Johnnie rose in a May morning,
Called for water to wash his hands,
And he has called for his good gray hounds
That lay bound in iron bands.

"Ye'll busk,[1] ye'll busk my noble dogs,
Ye'll busk and make them boun,[2]
For I'm going to the Braidscaur hill
To ding[3] the dun deer doun."

Johnnie's mother has gotten word o' that,
And care-bed she has ta'en:[4]
"O Johnnie, for my benison,
I beg you'll stay at hame;
For the wine so red, and the well-baken bread,
My Johnnie shall want nane.

"There are seven foresters at Pickeram Side,
At Pickeram where they dwell,
And for a drop of thy heart's blood
They would ride the fords of hell."

But Johnnie has cast off the black velvet,
And put on the Lincoln twine,[5]
And he is on to good greenwood
As fast as he could gang.

Johnnie lookit east, and Johnnie lookit west,
And he lookit aneath the sun,
And there he spied the dun deer sleeping
Aneath a buss o' whun.[6]

Johnnie shot, and the dun deer lap,[7]
And she lap wondrous wide,
Until they came to the wan[8] water,
And he stemmed her of her pride.

He has ta'en out the little pen-knife,
'Twas full three quarters long,
And he has ta'en out of that dun deer
The liver but and[9] the tongue.

They eat of the flesh, and they drank of the blood,
And the blood it was so sweet,
Which caused Johnnie and his bloody hounds
To fall in a deep sleep.

By then came an old palmer,
And an ill death may he die!
For he's away to Pickram Side
As fast as he can drie.[10]

"What news, what news?" says the Seven Foresters,
"What news have you brought to me?"
"I have no news," the palmer said,
"But what I saw with my eye.

"As I came in by Braidisbanks,
And down among the whuns,
The bonniest youngster e'er I saw
Lay sleepin' among his hunds.

"The shirt that was upon his back
Was o' the holland fine;
The doublet which was over that
Was o' the Lincoln twine."

Up bespake the Seven Foresters,
Up bespake they ane and a':
"O that is Johnnie o' Cockley's Well,
And near him we will draw."

O the first stroke that they gave him
They struck him off by the knee;
Then up bespake his sister's son:
"O the next 'll gar[11] him die!"

"O some they count ye well-wight[12] men,
But I do count ye nane;
For you might well ha' wakened me,
And asked gin[13] I would be ta'en.

"The wildest wolf in a' this wood
Would not ha' done so by me;
She'd ha' wet her foot in the wan water,
And sprinkled it o'er my brae,[14]
And if that would not ha' wakened me,
She would ha' gone and let me be.

"O bows of yew, if ye be true,
In London, where ye were bought,
Fingers five, get up belive,[15]
Manhood shall fail me nought."

He has killed the Seven Foresters,
He has killed them all but ane,
And that wan[16] scarce to Pickeram Side,
To carry the bode-words[17] hame.

---

[1] *busk*. Prepare.
[2] *boun*. Ready.
[3] *ding*. Strike.
[4] Grown ill with anxiety.
[5] *twine*. Cloth. (Lincoln cloth was the hunters' "green.")
[6] Under a bush of furze.
[7] *lap*. Leaped.
[8] *wan*. Dark.
[9] *but and*. And also.
[10] *drie*. Endure (to go).
[11] *gar*. Make (cause).
[12] *well-wight*. Hardy.
[13] *gin*. If.
[14] *brae*. Brow.
[15] *belive*. Quickly.
[16] *wan*. Came.
[17] *bode-words*. Tidings.

"Is there never a bird in a' this wood
That will tell what I can say;
That will go to Cockley's Well,
Tell my mither to fetch me away?"

There was a bird into that wood,
That carried the tidings away,
And many one was the well-wight man
At the fetching o' Johnnie away.

KINMONT WILLIE

[In its present form this ballad is partly the work of Sir Walter Scott. Kinmont Willie was William of Armstrong,—"Will o' Kinmouth." His capture and release took place in 1596. Lord Scroop was warden of the West-Marches of England, and Salkeld was his deputy. The Scotch marshal was Sir Walter Scott of Branxholm, laird of Buccleuch. Hairibee is the place of execution at Carlisle.]

O have ye na heard o' the false Sakelde?
O have ye na heard o' the keen[1] Lord Scroop?
How they ha' ta'en bold Kinmont Willie,
On Hairibee to hang him up?

Had Willie had but twenty men,
But twenty men as stout as he,
False Sakelde had never the Kinmont ta'en,
Wi' eight score in his company.

They bound his legs beneath the steed,
They tied his hands behind his back;
They guarded him, fivesome[2] on each side,
And they brought him over the Liddel rack.[3]

They led him through the Liddel rack,
And also through the Carlisle sands;
They brought him to Carlisle's castle,
To be at my Lord Scroop's commands.

"My hands are tied, but my tongue is free,
And who will dare this deed avow?
Or answer by the border law?
Or answer to the bold Buccleuch?"

"Now hold thy tongue, thou rank reiver![4]
There's never a Scot shall set ye free;
Before ye cross my castle-gate,
I trow ye shall take farewell o' me."

"Fear na ye that, my lord," quoth Willie,
"By the faith o' my body, Lord Scroop," he said,
"I never yet lodged in a hostelry
But I paid my lawing[5] before I gaed."

Now word is gone to the bold Keeper,
In Branksome Ha' where that he lay,
That Lord Scroop has ta'en the Kinmont Willie,
Between the hours of night and day.

He has ta'en the table wi' his hand,
He gar'd[6] the red wine spring on high;
"Now Christ's curse on my head," he said,
"But avenged of Lord Scroop I'll be.

"O is my basnet[7] a widow's curch?[8]
Or my lance a wand of the willow-tree?
Or my arm a lady's lily hand?
That an English lord should lightly me.

"And have they ta'en him Kinmont Willie,
Against the truce of Border tide,
And forgotten that the bold Buccleu
Is keeper here on the Scottish side?

"And have they e'en ta'en him Kinmont Willie,
Withouten either dread or fear,
And forgotten that the bold Buccleuch
Can back a steed, or shake a spear?

"O were there war between the lands,
As well I wot that there is none,
I would slight[9] Carlisle castle high,
Though it were builded of marble-stone.

"I would set that castle in a lowe,[10]
And slocken[11] it with English blood,
There's never a man in Cumberland
Should ken[12] where Carlisle castle stood.

"But since nae war's between the lands,
And there is peace, and peace should be,
I'll neither harm English lad or lass,
And yet the Kinmont freed shall be!"

---

[1] *keen.* Bold.
[2] *fivesome.* Five together.
[3] *rack.* Ford.
[4] *reiver.* Robber.
[5] *lawing.* Board account.
[6] *gar'd.* Made.
[7] *basnet.* Helmet.
[8] *curch.* Kerchief.
[9] *slight.* Raze.
[10] Make the castle a mere hillock.
[11] *slocken.* Drench.
[12] *ken.* Know.

He has called him forty marchmen bold,
I trow they were of his ain name,
Except Sir Gilbert Elliot, called
The Laird of Stobs, I mean the same.

He has called him forty marchmen bold,
Were kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch,
With spur on heel, and splent on spauld,[1]
And gloves of green, and feathers blue.

There were five and five before them a',
Wi' hunting-horns and bugles bright;
And five and five came wi' Buccleuch,
Like Warden's men, arrayed for fight.

And five and five like a mason-gang,
That carried the ladders lang and hie;
And five and five like broken men;[2]
And so they reached the Woodhouse-lee.

And as we crossed the Batable Land,[3]
When to the English side we held,
The first o' men that we met wi',
Whae should it be but false Sakelde!

"Where be ye gaun, ye hunters keen?"
Quoth false Sakelde; "come tell to me!"
"We go to hunt an English stag,
Has trespassed on the Scots countree."

"Where be ye gaun, ye marshal-men?"
Quoth false Sakelde; "come tell me true!"
"We go to catch a rank reiver,
Has broken faith wi' the bold Buccleuch."

"Where are ye gaun, ye mason-lads,
Wi' a' your ladders lang and hie?"
"We gang to harry[4] a corbie's[5] nest,
That wons[6] not far frae Woodhouse-lee."

"Where be ye gaun, ye broken men?"
Quoth false Sakelde; "come tell to me!"
Now Dickie of Dryhope led that band,
And the never a word o' lore[7] had he.

"Why trespass ye on the English side?
Row-footed[8] outlaws, stand!" quoth he;
The ne'er a word had Dickie to say,
So he thrust the lance through his false bodie.

Then on we held for Carlisle town,
And at Staneshaw-bank the Eden we crossed;
The water was great, and mickle of spait,[9]
But the never a horse nor man we lost.

And when we reached the Staneshaw-bank,
The wind was rising loud and hie;
And there the laird gar'd leave our steeds,
For fear that they should stamp and neigh.

And when we left the Staneshaw-bank,
The wind began full loud to blaw;
But 'twas wind and wet, and fire and sleet,
When we came beneath the castle wa'.

We crept on our knees, and held our breath,
Till we placed the ladders against the wa';
And so ready was Buccleuch himself
To mount the first before us a'.

He has ta'en the watchman by the throat,
He flung him down upon the lead;[10]
"Had there not been peace between our lands,
Upon the other side thou hadst gaed.

"Now sound out, trumpets!" quoth Buccleuch;
"Let's waken Lord Scroop right merrily."
Then loud the Warden's trumpets blew
"O wha dare meddle wi' me?"

Then speedily to work we gaed,
And raised the slogan ane and a',
And cut a hole through a sheet of lead,
And so we won to the castle-ha'.

They thought King James and a' his men
Had won the house wi' bow and spear;
It was but twenty Scots and ten
That put a thousand in sic a stear![11]

Wi' coulters and wi' forehammers[12]
We gar'd the bars bang merrily,
Until we came to the inner prison,
Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie.

---

[1] *splent on spauld.* Armor on shoulder.
[2] *broken men.* Outlaws.
[3] *Batable Land.* Border.
[4] *harry.* Plunder.
[5] *corbie's.* Crow's.
[6] *wons.* Dwells.
[7] *lore.* Learning.
[8] *Row-footed.* Rough-footed.
[9] *mickle of spait.* Great of flood.
[10] *lead.* That is, of the roof. Cf. line 127.
[11] *stear.* Stir.
[12] With plow-blades and sledge-hammers.

And when we came to the lower prison,
Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie,
"O sleep ye, wake ye, Kinmont Willie,
Upon the morn that thou's to die?"

"O I sleep soft, and I wake oft,
It's lang since sleeping was fleyd[1] from me;
Gi' my service back to my wife and bairns,
And a' good fellows that speir[2] for me."

Then Red Rowan has hent[3] him up,
The starkest man in Teviotdale.
"Abide, abide now, Red Rowan,
Till of my Lord Scroop I take farewell.

"Farewell, farewell, my good Lord Scroop!
My good Lord Scroop, farewell!" he cried.
"I'll pay you for my lodging-mail[4]
When first we meet on the border side."

Then shoulder high, with shout and cry,
We bore him down the ladder lang;
At every stride Red Rowan went,
I wot the Kinmont's iron played clang.

"O mony a time," quoth Kinmont Willie,
"I have ridden horse both wild and wood,[5]
But a rougher beast than Red Rowan
I ween my legs have ne'er bestrode.

"And mony a time," quoth Kinmont Willie,
"I've pricked a horse out o'er the furs,[6]
But since the day I backed a steed
I never wore sic cumbrous spurs."

We scarce had won the Staneshaw-bank,
When a' the Carlisle bells were rung,
And a thousand men, in horse and foot,
Came wi' the keen Lord Scroop along.

Buccleuch has turned to Eden Water,
Even where it flowed from bank to brim,
And he has plunged in wi' a' his band,
And safely swam them through the stream.

He turned him on the other side,
And at Lord Scroop his glove flung he:
"If ye like na my visit in merry England,
In fair Scotland come visit me!"

All sore astonished stood Lord Scroop,
He stood as still as rock of stane;
He scarcely dared to trow[7] his eyes
When through the water they had gane.

"He is either himsel a devil frae hell,
Or else his mother a witch maun[8] be;
I would na have ridden that wan[9] water
For a' the gold in Christentie."[10]

THE TWA SISTERS

[The refrain in the first stanza, which is supposed to be repeated in all the others, is of the irrelevant sort which merely gives evidence of the ballad's having been sung to a familiar tune.]

There was twa sisters in a bowr,
Edinbro, Edinbro,
There was twa sisters in a bowr,
Stirling for aye.
There was twa sisters in a bowr,
There came a knight to be their wooer,
Bonny St. Johnston stands upon Tay.

He courted the eldest wi glove an ring,
But he lovd the youngest above a' thing.

He courted the eldest wi brotch[11] an knife,
But he lovd the youngest as his life.

The eldest she was vexed sair,[12]
An much envi'd her sister fair.

Upon a morning fair an clear,
She cried upon her sister dear:

"O sister, come to yon sea stran,
An see our father's ships come to lan."

She's taen her by the milk-white han,
An led her down to yon sea stran.

The youngest stood upon a stane,
The eldest came and threw her in.

She took her by the middle sma,
An dashd her bonnie back to the jaw.[13]

---

[1] *fleyd.* Put to flight.
[2] *speir.* Ask.
[3] *hent.* Seized.
[4] *mail.* Rent.
[5] *wood.* Mad.
[6] *furs.* Ground (furrows).
[7] *trow.* Trust.
[8] *maun.* Must.
[9] *wan.* Dark.
[10] *Christentie.* Christendom.
[11] *brotch.* Brooch.
[12] *sair.* Sorely.
[13] Threw her backward into the water.

"O sister, sister, tak my han,
An Ise[1] mack you heir to a' my lan.

"O sister, sister, save my life,
And I swear Ise never be nae man's wife."

"Foul fa[2] the han that I should tacke,
It twind me an my warldes make.[3]

"Your cherry cheeks an yallow hair
Gars[4] me gae maiden for evermair."

Sometimes she sank, an sometimes she swam,
Till she came down yon bonny mill-dam.

O out it came the miller's son,
An saw the fair maid swimmin in.

"O father, father, draw your dam,
Here's either a mermaid or a swan."

The miller quickly drew the dam,
And there he found a drownd woman.

You coudna see her yallow hair
For gold and pearle that were so rare.

You coudna see her middle sma
For gouden girdle that was sae braw.[5]

You coudna see her fingers white
For gouden rings that was sae gryte.[6]

An by there came a harper fine,
That harped to the king at dine.

When he did look that lady upon,
He sighed and made a heavy moan.

He's taen three locks o' her yallow hair,
An wi them strung his harp sae fair.

The first tune he did play and sing,
Was, "Farewell to my father the king."

The nextin tune that he playd syne,[7]
Was, "Farewell to my mother the queen."

The lasten tune that he played then,
Was, "Wae to my sister, fair Ellen."

---

[1] *Ise.* I will.
[2] *Foul fa.* Evil befall.
[3] If it separated me from my earthly mate.
[4] *Gars.* Makes.
[5] *braw.* Fine.
[6] *gryte.* Great.
[7] *syne.* Afterward.

AGINCOURT

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

(From *Henry V*)

[In 1415 Henry V of England, prosecuting a claim to the French throne, landed in France with an invading army. He met the French forces, far superior in numbers to his own, at Agincourt, and on October 25 decisively defeated the Constable of France.]

I

Now all the youth of England are on fire,
And silken dalliance[1] in the wardrobe lies.
Now thrive the armorers, and honor's thought
Reigns solely in the breast of every man.
They sell the pasture now to buy the horse,
Following the mirror of all Christian kings,
With wingèd heels, as English Mercuries.
For now sits Expectation in the air,
And hides a sword from hilts unto the point
With crowns imperial, crowns and coronets,
Promised to Harry and his followers.
The French, advised by good intelligence
Of this most dreadful preparation,
Shake in their fear, and with pale policy
Seek to divert the English purposes.
O England! model to thy inward greatness,
Like little body with a mighty heart,
What mightst thou do, that honor would thee do,
Were all thy children kind and natural!

II

Suppose that you have seen
The well-appointed king at Hampton pier
Embark his royalty, and his brave fleet
With silken streamers the young Phœbus fanning.
Play with your fancies, and in them behold
Upon the hempen tackle ship-boys climbing;
Hear the shrill whistle which doth order give
To sounds confused; behold the threaden sails,
Borne with the invisible and creeping wind,

---

[1] *dalliance.* The life of ease which silken garments represent.

Draw the huge bottoms through the furrowed sea,
Breasting the lofty surge. O, do but think
You stand upon the rivage[1] and behold
A city on the inconstant billows dancing;
For so appears this fleet majestical,
Holding due course to Harfleur. Follow, follow!
Grapple your minds to sternage[2] of this navy,
And leave your England, as dead midnight still,
Guarded with grandsires, babies, and old women,
Either past or not arrived to pith and puissance.
For who is he, whose chin is but enriched
With one appearing hair, that will not follow
These culled and choice-drawn cavaliers to France?
Work, work your thoughts, and therein see a siege;
Behold the ordnance on their carriages,
With fatal mouths gaping on girded Harfleur.
Suppose the ambassador from the French comes back,
Tells Harry that the King doth offer him
Katharine his daughter, and with her, to dowry,
Some petty and unprofitable dukedoms.
The offer likes not; and the nimble gunner
With linstock now the devilish cannon touches,
And down goes all before them.

III

Now entertain conjecture of a time
When creeping murmur and the poring[3] dark
Fills the wide vessel of the universe.
From camp to camp through the foul womb of night
The hum of either army stilly sounds,
That the fixed sentinels almost receive
The secret whispers of each other's watch;
Fire answers fire, and through their paly flames
Each battle sees the other's umbered face;
Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful neighs
Piercing the night's dull ear; and from the tents
The armorers, accomplishing[4] the knights,
With busy hammers closing rivets up,
Give dreadful note of preparation.
The country cocks do crow, the clocks do toll,
And the third hour of drowsy morning name.
Proud of their numbers, and secure in soul,
The confident and over-lusty French
Do the low-rated English play at dice;
And chide the cripple tardy-gaited Night
Who, like a foul and ugly witch, doth limp
So tediously away. The poor condemned English,
Like sacrifices, by their watchful fires
Sit patiently and inly ruminate
The morning's danger; and their gesture sad,
Investing[5] lank-lean cheeks and war-worn coats,
Presented them unto the gazing moon
So many horrid ghosts. O now, who will behold
The royal captain of this ruined band
Walking from watch to watch, from tent to tent,
Let him cry, "Praise and glory on his head!"
For forth he goes and visits all his host,
Bids them good morrow with a modest smile,
And calls them brothers, friends, and countrymen.
Upon his royal face there is no note
How dread an army hath enrounded him;
Nor doth he dedicate one jot of color
Unto the weary and all-watchèd night,
But freshly looks, and over-bears attaint[6]
With cheerful semblance and sweet majesty;
That every wretch, pining and pale before,
Beholding him, plucks comfort from his looks.
A largess universal like the sun
His liberal eye doth give to every one,
Thawing cold fear, that mean and gentle all
Behold, as may unworthiness define,[7]
A little touch of Harry in the night.

---

[1] *rivage.* Shore.
[2] *to sternage.* To follow at the stern.
[3] *poring.* Brooding.
[4] *accomplishing.* Equipping.
[5] *Investing.* Accompanying, pervading.
[6] *attaint.* Fatigue.
[7] So far as our unworthiness can show it.

IV

Now we bear the King
Toward Calais; grant him there; there seen
Heave him away upon your wingèd thoughts
Athwart the sea. Behold, the English beach
Pales in the flood with men, with wives and boys,
Whose shouts and claps out-voice the deep-mouthed sea,
Which like a mighty whiffler[1] 'fore the King
Seems to prepare his way. So let him land,
And solemnly see him set on to London.
So swift a pace hath thought that even now
You may imagine him upon Blackheath,
Where that his lords desire him to have borne
His bruisèd helmet and his bended sword
Before him through the city. He forbids it,
Being free from vainness and self-glorious pride;
Giving full trophy, signal, and ostent[2]
Quite from himself to God. But now behold,
In the quick forge and working-house of thought,
How London doth pour out her citizens!
The mayor and all his brethren in best sort,
Like to the senators of the antique Rome,
With the plebeians swarming at their heels,
Go forth and fetch their conquering Cæsar in.

(1600)

AGINCOURT

MICHAEL DRAYTON

Fair stood the wind for France,
When we our sails advance;
Nor now to prove our chance
Longer will tarry;
But putting to the main,
At Caux, the mouth of Seine,
With all his martial train
Landed King Harry.

And taking many a fort,
Furnished in warlike sort,
Marcheth towards Agincourt
In happy hour;
Skirmishing, day by day,
With those that stopped his way,
Where the French general lay
With all his power.

Which, in his height of pride,
King Henry to deride,
His ransom to provide
To the King sending;
Which he neglects the while,
As from a nation vile,
Yet with an angry smile,
Their fall portending.

And turning to his men,
Quoth our brave Henry then:
"Though they to me be ten
Be not amazèd!
Yet have we well begun:
Battles so bravely won
Have ever to the sun
By Fame been raisèd!

"And for myself," quoth he,
"This my full rest[3] shall be:
England ne'er mourn for me,
Nor more esteem me!
Victor I will remain,
Or on this earth lie slain;
Never shall She sustain
Loss to redeem me!

"Poitiers and Cressy tell,
When most their pride did swell,
Under our swords they fell.
No less our skill is,
Than when our Grandsire great,[4]
Claiming the regal seat,
By many a warlike feat
Lopped the French lilies."[5]

The Duke of York so dread
The eager vanward led;
With the main, Henry sped
Amongst his henchmen:
Exeter had the rear,
A braver man not there!
O Lord, how hot they were
On the false Frenchmen!

---

[1] *whiffler.* Herald.
[2] *ostent.* Display.
[3] *rest.* Resolution.
[4] Edward III.
[5] *lilies.* The national flower of France.

They now to fight are gone;
Armour on armour shone;
Drum now to drum did groan:
  To hear, was wonder;
That, with the cries they make,
The very earth did shake;
Trumpet to trumpet spake;
  Thunder to thunder.

Well it thine age became,
O noble Erpingham,
Which didst the signal aim
  To our hid forces!
When, from a meadow by,
Like a storm suddenly,
The English archery
  Stuck the French horses.

With Spanish yew so strong;
Arrows a cloth-yard long,
That like to serpent stung,
  Piercing the weather.
None from his fellow starts;
But, playing manly parts,
And like true English hearts,
  Stuck close together.

When down their bows they threw,
And forth their bilboes[1] drew,
And on the French they flew:
  Not one was tardy.
Arms were from shoulders sent,
Scalps to the teeth were rent,
Down the French peasants went:
  Our men were hardy.

This while our noble King,
His broad sword brandishing,
Down the French host did ding,[2]
  As to o'erwhelm it;
And many a deep wound lent;
His arms with blood besprent,
And many a cruel dent
  Bruisèd his helmet.

Gloucester, that duke so good,
Next of the royal blood,
For famous England stood
  With his brave brother;
Clarence, in steel so bright,
Though but a maiden knight,
Yet in that furious fight
  Scarce such another!

Warwick in blood did wade,
Oxford, the foe invade,
And cruel slaughter made,
  Still as they ran up.

Suffolk his axe did ply;
Beaumont and Willoughby
Bare them right doughtily;
  Ferrers and Fanhope.

Upon Saint Crispin's Day
Fought was this noble fray;
Which Fame did not delay
  To England to carry.
O when shall English men
With such acts fill a pen?
Or England breed again
  Such a King Harry?

(1606)

NYMPHIDIA: THE COURT OF FAERY

MICHAEL DRAYTON

[A mock epic, in which Drayton playfully mingles the fairy lore of the romances with the classical mythology of earlier literature. A part of the story, relating certain adventures of Oberon and Puck, is omitted here.]

Old Chaucer doth of Thopas tell,
Mad Rabelais of Pantagruel,
A later third of Dowsabel,
  With such poor trifles playing:
Others the like have labored at,
Some of this thing, and some of that,
And many of they know not what,
  But that they must be saying.

Another sort there be, that will
Be talking of the fairies still,
Nor never can they have their fill
  As they were wedded to them:
No tales of them their thirst can slake,
So much delight therein they take,
And some strange thing they fain would make,
  Knew they the way to do them.

Then since no Muse hath been so bold,
Or of the later or the old,[3]
Those elvish secrets to unfold,
  Which lie from others' reading,
My active Muse to light shall bring
The court of that proud Fairy King,
And tell there of the reveling:
  Jove prosper my proceeding!

And thou Nymphidia, gentle Fay,
Which, meeting me upon the way,
These secrets didst to me bewray,[4]
  Which now I am in telling:

---

[1] *bilboes.* Swords.
[2] *ding.* Beat.
[3] Either of modern or ancient poets.
[4] *bewray.* Reveal.

My pretty light fantastic maid,
I here invoke to thee my aid,
That I may speak what thou hast said,
In numbers smoothly swelling.

This palace standeth in the air,
By necromancy placèd there,
That it no tempests needs to fear,
Which way soe'er it blow it:
And somewhat southward, toward the noon,
Whence lies a way up to the moon,
And thence the fairy can as soon
Pass to the earth below it.

The walls of spiders' legs are made,
Well morticèd and finely laid,—
He was the master of his trade,
It curiously that builded;
The windows of the eyes of cats,
And for the roof, instead of slats,
Is covered with the skins of bats,
With moonshine that are gilded.

Hence Oberon, him sport to make
(Their rest when weary mortals take,
And none but only fairies wake),
Descendeth for his pleasure;
And Mab, his merry Queen, by night
Bestrides young folks that lie upright[1]
(In elder times the Mare that hight),[2]
Which plagues them out of measure.

Hence shadows, seeming idle shapes,
Of little frisking elves and apes,
To earth do make their wanton scapes,
As hope of pastime hastes them;
Which maids think on the hearth they see,
When fires well-near consumèd be,
There dancing hayes[3] by two and three,
Just as their fancy casts[4] them.

These make our girls their sluttery rue,[5]
By pinching them both black and blue,
And put a penny in their shoe
The house for cleanly sweeping;
And in their courses make that round,[6]
In meadows and in marshes found,
Of them so called the "fairy ground,"
Of which they have the keeping.

But listen, and I shall you tell
A chance in Fairy[7] that befell,
Which certainly may please some well,
In love and arms delighting:

Of Oberon, that jealous grew
Of one of his own fairy crew,
Too well (he feared) his queen that knew,
His love but ill requiting.

Pigwiggen was this fairy knight,
One wondrous gracious in the sight
Of fair Queen Mab, which day and night
He amorously observèd;
Which made King Oberon suspect
His service took too good effect,
His sauciness and often checked,[8]
And could have wished him starvèd.[9]

Pigwiggen gladly would commend
Some token to Queen Mab to send,
If sea or land him aught could lend,
Were worthy of her wearing.
At length this lover doth devise
A bracelet made of emmets' eyes,
A thing he thought that she would prize,
No whit her state impairing.

And to the Queen a letter writes,
Which he most curiously indites,
Conjuring her by all the rites
Of love, she would be pleasèd
To meet him, her true servant, where
They might without suspect of fear
Themselves to one another clear,
And have their poor hearts easèd.

"At midnight the appointed hour,
And for the Queen a fitting bower,"
Quoth he, "is that fair cowslip flower,
On Hipcut Hill that groweth.
In all your train there's not a fay
That ever went to gather May,[10]
But she hath made[11] it in her way,—
The tallest there that groweth."

When by Tom Thumb, a fairy page,
He sent it, and doth him engage,
By promise of a mighty wage,
It secretly to carry:
Which done, the Queen her maids doth call,
And bids them to be ready all,
She would go see her summer hall,—
She could no longer tarry.

Her chariot ready straight is made,
Each thing therein is fitting laid,
That she by nothing might be stayed,
For naught must her be letting.[12]

---

[1] *upright.* On their backs.
[2] *hight.* Was called.
[3] *hayes.* Reels.
[4] *casts.* Inclines.
[5] *their sluttery rue.* Repent their untidiness.
[6] *round.* Circle (the "fairy ring").
[7] *Fairy.* Fairyland.
[8] And often rebuked his sauciness.
[9] *starved.* Dead.
[10] *May.* May-blossoms (hawthorn).
[11] *made.* Arranged to pass.
[12] *letting.* Hindering.

Four nimble gnats the horses were,
Their harnesses of gossamer,
Fly Cranion, her charioteer,
Upon the coach-box getting.

Her chariot of a snail's fine shell,
Which for the colors did excel;
The fair Queen Mab becoming well,
So lively was the limning;[1]
The seat the soft wool of the bee,
The cover (gallantly to see)
The wing of a pied butterflee,—
I trow 'twas simple trimming.

The wheels composed of crickets' bones,
And daintily made for the nonce;[2]
For fear of rattling on the stones,
With thistle-down they shod it;
For all her maidens much did fear,
If Oberon had chanced to hear
That Mab his Queen should have been there,
He would not have abode[3] it.

She mounts her chariot with a trice,
Nor would she stay for no advice,
Until her maids, that were so nice,[4]
To wait on her were fitted,
But ran herself away alone;
Which when they heard, there was not one
But hasted after to be gone,
As she had been diswitted.

Hop, and Mop, and Drap so clear,
Pip, and Trip, and Skip, that were
To Mab their sovereign ever dear,
Her special maids of honor;
Fib, and Tib, and Pink, and Pin,
Tick, and Quick, and Jill, and Jin,
Tit, and Nit, and Wap, and Win,
The train that wait upon her.

Upon a grasshopper they got,
And what with amble and with trot,
For hedge nor ditch they sparèd not,
But after her they hie them.
A cobweb over them they throw,
To shield the wind if it should blow;
Themselves they wisely could bestow,[5]
Lest any should espy them.

But let us leave Queen Mab awhile,
Through many a gate, o'er many a stile,
That now had gotten, by this wile,
Her dear Pigwiggen kissing,
And tell how Oberon doth fare,
Who grew as mad as any hare,
When he had sought each place with care,
And found his Queen was missing.

. . . . .

The Queen, bound with love's powerful charm,
Sat with Pigwiggen arm in arm;
Her merry maids, that thought no harm,
About the room were skipping.
A humble-bee, their minstrel, played
Upon his hautbois;[6] every maid
Fit for this revel was arrayed,
The hornpipe neatly tripping.

In comes Nymphidia, and doth cry,
"My sovereign, for your safety fly!
For there is danger but too nigh;
I posted[7] to forewarn you.
The King hath sent Hobgoblin out,
To seek you all the fields about,
And of your safety you may doubt,
If he but once discern you."

When, like an uproar in a town,
Before them every thing went down;
Some tore a ruff, and some a gown,
'Gainst one another jostling;
They flew about like chaff i' the wind;
For haste some left their masks behind,—
Some could not stay their gloves to find;
There never was such bustling.

Forth ran they by a secret way,
Into a brake[8] that near them lay,
Yet much they doubted there to stay,
Lest Hob should hap to find them:—
He had a sharp and piercing sight,
All one to him the day or night,
And therefore were resolved by flight
To leave this place behind them.

At length one chanced to find a nut,
In th' end of which a hole was cut,
Which lay upon a hazel root,
There scattered by a squirrel,
Which out the kernel gotten had;
When quoth this fay, "Dear queen, be glad,
Let Oberon be ne'er so mad,
I'll set you safe from peril.

---

[1] *limning.* Painting.
[2] *nonce.* Occasion (formerly written *nones*, and probably intended to be so read here).
[3] *abode.* Endured.
[4] *nice.* Scrupulous.
[5] *bestow.* Dispose of.
[6] *hautbois.* Oboe.
[7] *posted.* Hurried.
[8] *brake.* Fern.

"Come all into this nut," quoth she;
"Come closely in, be ruled by me;
Each one may here a chooser be,
For room ye need not wrestle,
Nor need ye be together heaped."
So one by one therein they crept,
And lying down, they soundly slept,
And safe as in a castle.

. . . . .

But leave we Hob to clamber out,
Queen Mab and all her fairy rout,
And come again to have a bout
With Oberon yet madding;
And with Pigwiggen, now distraught,
Who much was troubled in his thought,
That he so long the Queen had sought,
And through the fields was gadding.

And as he runs, he still doth cry,
"King Oberon, I thee defy,
And dare thee here in arms to try,
For my dear lady's honor;
For that she is a queen right good,
In whose defense I'll shed my blood,
And that thou in this jealous mood
Hast laid this slander on her;"

And quickly arms him for the field,
A little cockle-shell his shield,
Which he could very bravely wield,
Yet it could not be piercèd;
His spear a bent[1] both stiff and strong,
And well-near of two inches long,—
The pile[2] was of a horse-fly's tongue,
Whose sharpness naught reversèd;[3]

And puts him on a coat of mail,
Which was of a fish's scale,
That when his foe should him assail,
No point should be prevailing.
His rapier was a hornet's sting,—
It was a very dangerous thing,
For if he chanced to hurt the king,
It would be long in healing.

His helmet was a beetle's head,
Most horrible and full of dread,
That able was to strike one dead,
Yet it did well become him;
And for a plume, a horse's hair,
Which, being tossèd by the air,
Had force to strike his foe with fear,
And turn his weapon from him.

Himself he on an earwig set,
Yet scarce he on his back could get,
So oft and high he did curvet,
E'er he himself could settle;
He made him turn, and stop and bound,
To gallop, and to trot the round,—
He scarce could stand on any ground,
He was so full of mettle.

When soon he met with Tomalin,
One that a valiant knight had been,
And to great Oberon of kin,
Quoth he, "Thou manly fairy,
Tell Oberon I come prepared,
Then bid him stand upon his guard;
This hand his baseness shall reward,
Let him be ne'er so wary.

"Say to him thus, That I defy
His slanders and his infamy,
And as a mortal enemy
Do publicly proclaim him;
Withal, that if I had mine own,
He should not wear the Fairy crown,
But with a vengeance should come down,
Nor we a king should name him."

This Tomalin could not abide
To hear his sovereign vilified,
But to the Fairy court him hied,
Full furiously he posted,
With every thing Pigwiggen said,—
How title to the crown he laid,
And in what arms he was arrayed,
And how himself he boasted.

'Twixt head and foot, from point to point,
He told the arming of each joint,
In every piece how neat and quaint,—
For Tomalin could do it,—
How fair he sat, how sure he rid,
As of the courser he bestrid,
How managed, and how well he did.
The King, which listened to it,

Quoth he, "Go, Tomalin, with speed,
Provide me arms, provide my steed,
And every thing that I shall need;
By thee I will be guided.
To straight account call thou thy wit,
See there be wanting not a whit,
In every thing see thou me fit,
Just as my foe's provided."

Soon flew this news through Fairyland,
Which gave Queen Mab to understand
The combat that was then in hand
Betwixt those men so mighty;

---

[1] *bent.* Grass-stalk.
[2] *pile.* Spear-head.
[3] *reversed.* Turned.

Which greatly she began to rue,
Perceiving that all Fairy knew
The first occasion from her grew[1]
Of these affairs so weighty.

Wherefore, attended with her maids,
Through fogs and mists and damps she wades,
To Proserpine, the Queen of shades,
To treat[2] that it would please her
The cause into her hands to take,
For ancient love and friendship's sake,
And soon thereof an end to make,
Which of much care would ease her.

A while there let we Mab alone,
And come we to King Oberon,
Who armed to meet his foe is gone,
For proud Pigwiggen crying,
Who sought the Fairy King as fast,
And had so well his journeys cast[3]
That he arrivèd at the last,
His puissant foe espying.

Stout Tomalin came with the King,
Tom Thumb doth on Pigwiggen bring,
That perfect were in every thing
To single fights belonging;
And therefore they themselves engage
To see them exercise their rage
With fair and comely equipage,
Not one the other wronging.

So like in arms these champions were,
As they had been a very pair,
So that a man would almost swear
That either had been either;
Their furious steeds began to neigh,
That they were heard a mighty way;
Their staves upon their rests they lay;
Yet, e'er they flew together,

Their seconds minister an oath,
Which was indifferent[4] to them both,
That, on their knightly faith and troth,
No magic them suppliėd,
And sought[5] them, that they had no charms
Wherewith to work each other's harms,
But came with simple open arms
To have their causes triėd.

Together furiously they ran,
That to the ground came horse and man;
The blood out of their helmets span,[6]
So sharp were their encounters;
And though they to the earth were thrown,
Yet quickly they regained their own,—
Such nimbleness was never shown,—
They were two gallant mounters.[7]

When in a second course again
They forward came with might and main,
Yet which had better of the twain,
The seconds could not judge yet;
Their shields were into pieces cleft,
Their helmets from their heads were reft,
And to defend them nothing left;
These champions would not budge yet.

Away from them their staves they threw,
Their cruel swords they quickly drew,
And freshly they the fight renew,—
They every stroke redoubled;
Which made Proserpina take heed,
And make to them the greater speed,
For fear lest they too much should bleed,
Which wondrously her troubled.

When to th' infernal Styx[8] she goes,
She takes the fogs from thence that rose,
And in a bag doth them enclose,
When well she had them blended;
She hies her then to Lethe spring,
A bottle and thereof doth bring,
Wherewith she meant to work the thing
Which only she intended.

Now Proserpine with Mab is gone
Unto the place where Oberon
And proud Pigwiggen, one to one,
Both to be slain were likely;
And there themselves they closely hide,
Because they would not be espied;
For Proserpine meant to decide
The matter very quickly.

And suddenly unties the poke,[9]
Which out of it sent such a smoke,
As ready was them all to choke,
So grievous was the pother;
So that the knights each other lost,
And stood as still as any post;
Tom Thumb nor Tomalin could boast
Themselves of any other.

---

[1] The original cause lay in her.
[2] *treat.* Entreat.
[3] *cast.* Planned.
[4] *indifferent.* Identical.
[5] *sought.* Searched.
[6] *span.* Spurted.
[7] *mounters.* Riders.
[8] *Styx.* The river of Hades.
[9] *poke.* Bag.

very [illegible] poetic [illegible]
Introduce [illegible]

But when the mist gan somewhat cease,
Proserpina commandeth peace,
And that awhile they should release
  Each other of their peril;
"Which here," quoth she, "I do proclaim
To all, in dreadful Pluto's name,
That, as ye will eschew[1] his blame,
  You let me hear the quarrel.

"But here yourselves you must engage
Somewhat to cool your spleenish rage,
Your grievous thirst and to assuage,
  That first you drink this liquor,
Which shall your understandings clear,
As plainly shall to you appear,
Those things from me that you shall hear
  Conceiving much the quicker."

This Lethe water, you must know,
The memory destroyeth so,
That of our weal or of our woe
  Is all remembrance blotted;
Of it nor can you ever think;
For they no sooner took this drink,
But nought into their brains could sink
  Of what had them besotted.[2]

King Oberon forgotten had
That he for jealousy ran mad,
But of his Queen was wondrous glad,
  And asked how they came thither.
Pigwiggen likewise doth forget
That he Queen Mab had ever met,
Or that they were so hard beset,
  When they were found together.

Nor either of 'em both had thought
That e'er they had each other sought,
Much less that they a combat fought,
  But such a dream were loathing.
Tom Thumb had got a little sup,
And Tomalin scarce kissed the cup,
Yet had their brains so sure locked up
  That they remembered nothing.

Queen Mab and her light maids the while
Among themselves do closely smile,
To see the King caught with this wile,
  With one another jesting;
And to the Fairy court they went,
With mickle joy and merriment,
Which thing was done with good intent;
  And thus I left them feasting.

(1627)

---

[1] *eschew.* Avoid.
[2] *besotted.* Made fools of them.

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

ALEXANDER POPE

[This poem deals with an episode in the social life of Pope's day. Lord Petre had playfully cut a lock of hair from the head of Miss Arabella Fermor, and the act resulted in resentment and the estrangement of the two families. Caryll, a common friend, suggested to Pope the poetizing of the incident, with the hope that the ill feeling would be laughed away. Pope developed the story in the manner of a mock epic, everywhere imitating the style of the *Iliad* and the *Æneid* in particular. Thus the sylphs are introduced to parallel the deities of the ancient epics; Belinda's bodkin (Canto 5, lines 88-96) is described in the manner of the historic sceptre of Agamemnon; and the speeches are in part modeled on epic oratory.]

CANTO I

What dire offence from amorous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
I sing.—This verse to Caryll, Muse! is due;
This, e'en Belinda may vouchsafe to view.
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,
If she inspire, and he approve my lays.
  Say what strange motive, Goddess! could compel
A well-bred lord t' assault a gentle belle?
Oh, say what stranger cause, yet unexplored,
Could make a gentle belle reject a lord?
In tasks so bold, can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?
  Sol through white curtains shot a timorous ray,
And oped those eyes that must eclipse the day.
Now lap-dogs give themselves the rousing shake,
And sleepless lovers, just at twelve, awake.
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knocked the ground,[1]
And the pressed watch[2] returned a silver sound.
Belinda still her downy pillow pressed,
Her guardian sylph prolonged the balmy rest;
'Twas he had summoned to her silent bed
The morning dream that hovered o'er her head;
A youth more glittering than a birth-night beau,[3]
(That e'en in slumber caused her cheek to glow)

---

[1] To call the lady's maid.
[2] A striking watch.
[3] *birth-night beau.* A beau at a ball on a royal birthday.

A certain sense to each
[illegible] not always
[illegible] usual

Seemed to her ear his winning lips to lay,
And thus in whispers said, or seemed to say:
"Fairest of mortals, thou distinguished care
Of thousand bright inhabitants of air!
If e'er one vision touched thy infant thought,
Of all the nurse and all the priest have taught,
Of airy elves by moonlight shadows seen,
The silver token,[1] and the circled green,
Or virgins visited by angel powers,
With golden crowns and wreaths of heavenly flowers;
Hear and believe; thy own importance know,
Nor bound thy narrow views to things below.
Some secret truths, from learnèd pride concealed,
To maids alone and children are revealed.
What though no credit doubting wits may give?
The fair and innocent shall still believe.
Know, then, unnumbered spirits round thee fly,
The light militia of the lower sky.
These, though unseen, are ever on the wing,
Hang o'er the box,[2] and hover round the Ring.[3]
Think what an equipage thou hast in air,
And view with scorn two pages and a chair.[4]
As now your own, our beings were of old,
And once enclosed in woman's beauteous mould;
Thence, by a soft transition, we repair
From earthly vehicles to these of air.
Think not, when woman's transient breath is fled,
That all her vanities at once are dead;
Succeeding vanities she still regards,
And though she plays no more, o'erlooks the cards.
Her joy in gilded chariots, when alive,
And love of ombre,[5] after death survive.
For when the fair in all their pride expire,
To their first elements their souls retire:
The sprites of fiery termagants in flame
Mount up, and take a salamander's name.
Soft yielding minds to water glide away,
And sip, with nymphs, their elemental tea.
The graver prude sinks downward to a gnome,
In search of mischief still on earth to roam.
The light coquettes in sylphs aloft repair,
And sport and flutter in the fields of air.
"Know further yet: whoever fair and chaste
Rejects mankind, is by some sylph embraced;
For spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease
Assume what sexes and what shapes they please.
What guards the purity of melting maids,
In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,
Safe from the treacherous friend, the daring spark,[6]
The glance by day, the whisper in the dark,
When kind occasion prompts their warm desires,
When music softens, and when dancing fires?
'Tis but their sylph, the wise celestials know,
Though honour is the word with men below.
Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their face,
For life predestined to the gnomes' embrace.
These swell their prospects and exalt their pride,
When offers are disdained, and love denied:
Then gay ideas crowd the vacant brain,
While peers, and dukes, and all their sweeping train,
And garters, stars, and coronets appear,
And in soft sounds 'Your Grace' salutes the ear.
'Tis these that early taint the female soul,
Instruct the eyes of young coquettes to roll,
Teach infant cheeks a bidden blush to know,
And little hearts to flutter at a beau.
"Oft when the world imagine women stray,
The sylphs through mystic mazes guide their way,
Through all the giddy circle they pursue,
And old impertinence expel by new.

---

[1] *silver token.* Silver pieces were said to be dropped by fairies into the shoes of deserving maidens.

[2] *box.* Theatre box.

[3] *Ring.* A fashionable walk.

[4] *chair.* Sedan chair.

[5] *ombre.* A game of cards.

[6] *spark.* Beau, gallant.

What tender maid but must a victim fall
To one man's treat, but for another's ball?
When Florio speaks, what virgin could withstand,
If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand?
With varying vanities, from every part,
They shift the moving toyshop of their heart;
Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots strive,
Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive.
This erring mortals levity may call;
Oh, blind to truth! the sylphs contrive it all.
"Of these am I, who thy protection claim,
A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name.
Late, as I ranged the crystal wilds of air,
In the clear mirror of thy ruling star
I saw, alas! some dread event impend,
Ere to the main[1] this morning sun descend,
But Heaven reveals not what, or how, or where.
Warned by the sylph, O pious maid, beware!
This to disclose is all thy guardian can:
Beware of all, but most beware of man!"
He said; when Shock, who thought she slept too long,
Leaped up, and waked his mistress with his tongue.
'Twas then, Belinda, if report say true,
Thy eyes first opened on a billet-doux;
Wounds, charms, and ardours were no sooner read,
But all the vision vanished from thy head.
And now, unveiled, the toilet stands displayed,
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,
With head uncovered, the cosmetic powers.
A heavenly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;
Th' inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of pride.
Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here
The various offerings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the goddess with the glittering spoil.
This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The tortoise here and elephant unite,
Transformed to combs, the speckled, and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billets-doux.
Now awful beauty puts on all its arms;
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.
The busy sylphs surround their darling care,
These set the head,[2] and those divide the hair,
Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown;
And Betty's praised for labours not her own.

[illegible]

CANTO II

Not with more glories, in th' ethereal plain,
The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
Launched on the bosom of the silver Thames.
Fair nymphs and well-dressed youths around her shone,
But every eye was fixed on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfixed as those;
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide;
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.
This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourished two locks, which graceful hung behind

---

[1] *main.* Ocean.

[2] *head.* Head-dress.

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In equal curls, and well conspired to deck
With shining ringlets and smooth ivory neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes, we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.
  Th' adventurous baron the bright locks admired;
He saw, he wished, and to the prize aspired.
Resolved to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;
For when success a lover's toil attends,
Few ask, if fraud or force attained his ends.
  For this, ere Phœbus rose, he had implored
Propitious Heaven, and every power adored,
But chiefly Love; to Love an altar built,
Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves,
And all the trophies of his former loves;
With tender billets-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three amorous sighs to raise the fire.
Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize.
The powers gave ear, and granted half his prayer;[1]
The rest the winds dispersed in empty air.
  But now secure the painted vessel glides,
The sunbeams trembling on the floating tides;
While melting music steals upon the sky,
And softened sounds along the waters die;
Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently play,
Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay.
All but the sylph—with careful thoughts oppressed,
Th' impending woe sat heavy on his breast.
He summons straight his denizens of air;
The lucid squadrons round the sails repair;
Soft o'er the shrouds aërial whispers breathe,
That seemed but zephyrs to the train beneath.
Some to the sun their insect wings unfold,
Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold;
Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,
Their fluid bodies half dissolved in light.
Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,
Thin glittering textures of the filmy dew,[2]
Dipt in the richest tincture of the skies,
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,
While every beam new transient colours flings,
Colours that change whene'er they wave their wings.
Amid the circle, on the gilded mast
Superior by the head, was Ariel placed;
His purple pinions opening to the sun,
He raised his azure wand, and thus begun:
  "Ye sylphs and sylphids, to your chief give ear!
Fays, fairies, genii, elves, and demons, hear!
Ye know the spheres, and various tasks assigned
By laws eternal to th' aërial kind.
Some in the fields of purest æther play,
And bask and whiten in the blaze of day.
Some guide the course of wandering orbs on high,
Or roll the planets through the boundless sky.
Some less refined, beneath the moon's pale light
Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,
Or suck the mists in grosser air below,
Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,
Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main,
Or o'er the glebe distil the kindly rain;
Others on earth o'er human race preside,
Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide:
Of these the chief the care of nations own,
And guard with arms divine the British throne.
  "Our humbler province is to tend the fair,
Not a less pleasing, though less glorious care;

---

[1] *half his prayer.* He was to obtain the lock, but not to keep it long.

[2] Gossamer (formerly supposed to be the product of dew).

To save the powder from too rude a gale,
Nor let th' imprisoned essences exhale;
To draw from rainbows, ere they drop in showers,
A brighter wash; to curl their waving hairs,
Assist their blushes, and inspire their airs;
Nay, oft in dreams, invention we bestow,
To change a flounce, or add a furbelow.
"This day, black omens threat the brightest fair
That e'er deserved a watchful spirit's care;
Some dire disaster, or by force, or sleight;
But what, or where, the fates have wrapped in night.
Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,
Or some frail china jar receive a flaw;
Or stain her honour, or her new brocade;
Forget her prayers, or miss a masquerade;
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball;
Or whether Heaven has doomed that Shock must fall.
Haste, then, ye spirits! to your charge repair;
The fluttering fan be Zephyretta's care;
The drops[1] to thee, Brillante, we consign;
And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine;
Do thou, Crispissa, tend her favourite lock;
Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.
"To fifty chosen sylphs, of special note,
We trust th' important charge, the petticoat:
Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail,
Tho' stiff with hoops, and arm'd with ribs of whale;
Form a strong line about the silver bound,
And guard the wide circumference around.
"Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
His post neglects, or leaves the fair at large,
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his sins,
Be stopped in vials, or transfixed with pins;
Or plunged in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedged whole ages in a bodkin's eye;
Gums and pomatums shall his flight restrain,
While clogged he beats his silken wings in vain;
Or alum styptics with contracting power
Shrink his thin essence like a rivelled[2] flower;
Or, as Ixion fixed, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling mill,[3]
In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the sea that froths below!"
He spoke; the spirits from the sails descend;
Some, orb in orb, around the nymph extend;
Some thrid the mazy ringlets of her hair;
Some hang upon the pendants of her ear;
With beating hearts the dire event they wait,
Anxious and trembling for the birth of fate.

CANTO III

Close by those meads, forever crowned with flowers,
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising towers,
There stands a structure of majestic frame,[4]
Which from the neighbouring Hampton takes its name.
Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign tyrants and of nymphs at home;
Here thou, great Anna! whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea.
Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort,
To taste awhile the pleasures of a court;
In various talk th' instructive hours they passed,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
At every word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.
Meanwhile, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray;
The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jurymen may dine;

---

[1] *drops.* Ear-jewels.
[2] *rivelled.* Withered.
[3] Chocolate was ground in a hand-mill.
[4] Hampton Court Palace.

The merchant from th' Exchange returns in peace,
And the long labours of the toilet cease.
Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,
Burns to encounter two adventurous knights,
At ombre singly to decide their doom;[1]
And swells her breast with conquests yet to come.
Straight the three bands prepare in arms to join,
Each band the number of the sacred nine.
Soon as she spreads her hand, th' aërial guard
Descend, and sit on each important card:
First, Ariel perched upon a Matadore,
Then each, according to the rank they bore;
For sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient race,
Are, as when women, wondrous fond of place.
  Behold, four kings in majesty revered,
With hoary whiskers and a forky beard;
And four fair queens whose hands sustain a flower,
The expressive emblem of their softer power;
Four knaves in garbs succinct, a trusty band,
Caps on their heads, and halberts in their hand;
And parti-coloured troops, a shining train,
Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain.
  The skilful nymph reviews her force with care:
Let spades be trumps! she said, and trumps they were.
  Now move to war her sable Matadores,
In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors.

Mock heroic.

Spadillio first, unconquerable lord!
Led off two captive trumps and swept the board.
As many more Manillio forced to yield
And marched a victor from the verdant field.
Him Basto followed, but his fate more hard
Gained but one trump and one plebeian card.
With his broad sabre next, a chief in years,
The hoary majesty of spades appears,
Puts forth one manly leg, to sight revealed,
The rest his many-coloured robe concealed.
The rebel knave, who dares his prince engage,
Proves the just victim of his royal rage.
E'en mighty Pam,[2] that kings and queens o'erthrew,
And mowed down armies in the fights of Loo,
Sad chance of war! now destitute of aid,
Falls undistinguished by the victor spade!
  Thus far both armies to Belinda yield;
Now to the baron fate inclines the field.
His warlike Amazon her host invades,
The imperial consort of the crown of spades;
The club's black tyrant[3] first her victim died,
Spite of his haughty mien, and barbarous pride.
What boots the regal circle on his head,
His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread;
That long behind he trails his pompous robe,
And, of all monarchs, only grasps the globe?
  The baron now his diamonds pours apace;
Th' embroidered king who shows but half his face,
And his refulgent queen, with powers combined,
Of broken troops an easy conquest find.
Clubs, diamonds, hearts, in wild disorder seen,
With throngs promiscuous strew the level green.
Thus when dispersed a routed army runs,
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,

---

[1] The next 70 lines are descriptive of the game of Ombre—one of Spanish origin, the name meaning "Man." Forty cards are used, nine being dealt, the rest drawn for somewhat as in Pedro. The players are usually three in number; one makes the trump, and the other two combine against him. If either of them takes more tricks than he, he is defeated, has suffered *codille* (see line 92). The maker of trumps is "the man," or "it." The order of the cards varies with the trump. The three high cards, always called *spadille*, *manille*, and *basto*, are "matadores"; that is, they will slay any other cards sent against them, as a matadore slays a bull. *Spadille* is always the ace of spades; *manille* is the seven, if a red suit is trump, or the two, if a black is trump; *basto* is the ace of clubs. Except as the aces are matadores, the face cards are all higher than they. Notice that in line 98 Belinda takes the ace of hearts with her king. Lines 30-43 indicate the value of the cards.

[2] *Pam.* The knave or "Jack" of clubs; in the game of Loo he is the highest card.

[3] *black tyrant.* The king of clubs. Any trump would take any other non-trump card, the matadores being considered as trumps.

With like confusion different nations fly,
Of various habit, and of various dye,
The pierced battalions disunited fall,
In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms them all.
The knave of diamonds tries his wily arts,
And wins (oh shameful chance!) the queen of hearts.
At this the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look;
She sees, and trembles at th' approaching ill,
Just in the jaws of ruin, and codille.
And now (as oft in some distempered state)
On one nice trick depends the general fate.
An ace of hearts steps forth; the king unseen
Lurked in her hand, and mourned his captive queen;
He springs to vengeance with an eager pace,
And falls like thunder on the prostrate ace.
The nymph exulting fills with shouts the sky;
The walls, the woods, and long canals reply.
Oh thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.
Sudden, these honours shall be snatched away,
And cursed forever this victorious day.
For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crowned,
The berries[1] crackle, and the mill turns round;
On shining altars of Japan[2] they raise
The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze;
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking tide:
At once they gratify their scent and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.
Straight hover round the fair her airy band;
Some, as she sipped, the fuming liquor fanned,
Some o'er her lap their careful plumes displayed,
Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade.

Mock heroic

Coffee (which makes the politician wise,
And see through all things with his half-shut eyes)
Sent up in vapours to the baron's brain
New stratagems the radiant lock to gain.
Ah, cease, rash youth! desist ere 'tis too late!
Fear the just gods, and think of Scylla's[3] fate!
Changed to a bird, and sent to flit in air,
She dearly pays for Nisus' injured hair!
But when to mischief mortals bend their will,
How soon they find fit instruments of ill!
Just then Clarissa drew with tempting grace
A two-edged weapon from her shining case:
So ladies in romance assist their knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.
He takes the gift with reverence, and extends
The little engine on his finger's ends;
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steam she bends her head.
Swift to the lock a thousand sprites repair,
A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair;
And thrice they twitched the diamond in her ear;
Thrice she looked back, and thrice the foe drew near.
Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the virgin's thought;
As on the nosegay in her breast reclined,
He watched th' ideas rising in her mind,
Sudden he viewed, in spite of all her art,
An earthly lover lurking at her heart.
Amazed, confused, he found his power expired,
Resigned to fate, and with a sigh retired.
The peer now spreads the glittering forfex[4] wide,
T' inclose the lock; now joins it, to divide.
E'en then, before the fatal engine closed,
A wretched sylph too fondly interposed;
Fate urged the shears, and cut the sylph in twain,
(But airy substance soon unites again).[5]

Sup
superstition

---

[1] *berries.* Coffee.

[2] *altars of Japan.* Japanned tables, then much in fashion.

[3] *Scylla.* Daughter of Nisus, king of Megara, who pulled from her father's head the golden (or purple) hair upon which the safety of the city depended.

[4] *forfex.* Pair of scissors.

[5] A humorous parallel to the epic treatment of the wounding of supernatural beings.

The meeting points the sacred hair dissever
From the fair head, forever, and forever!
Then flashed the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.
Not louder shrieks to pitying Heaven are cast,
When husbands, or when lap-dogs breathe their last;
Or when rich China vessels, fallen from high,
In glittering dust and painted fragments lie!
"Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine,"
The victor cried; "the glorious prize is mine!
While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,
Or in a coach and six the British fair,
As long as Atalantis[1] shall be read,
Or the small pillow grace a lady's bed,
While visits shall be paid on solemn days,
When numerous wax-lights in bright order blaze,
While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,
So long my honour, name, and praise shall live!
What Time would spare, from steel receives its date,[2]
And monuments, like men, submit to fate!
Steel could the labour of the gods destroy,
And strike to dust th' imperial towers of Troy;
Steel could the works of mortal pride confound,
And hew triumphal arches to the ground.
What wonder then, fair nymph! thy hairs should feel
The conquering force of unresisted steel?"

CANTO IV

But anxious cares the pensive nymph oppressed,
And secret passions laboured in her breast.
Not youthful kings in battle seized alive,
Not scornful virgins who in their charms survive,
Not ardent lovers robbed of all their bliss,
Not ancient ladies when refused a kiss,
Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinned awry,
E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,
As thou, sad virgin, for thy ravished hair.
For, that sad moment, when the sylphs withdrew
And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew,
Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite,
As ever sullied the fair face of light,
Down to the central earth, his proper scene,
Repaired to search the gloomy cave of Spleen.[3]
Swift on his sooty pinions flits the gnome,
And in a vapour reached the dismal dome.
No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows,
The dreaded east is all the wind that blows.
Here in a grotto, sheltered close from air,
And screened in shades from day's detested glare,
She sighs forever on her pensive bed,
Pain at her side, and Megrim[4] at her head.
Two handmaids wait[5] the throne, alike in place,
But differing far in figure and in face.
Here stood Ill-nature like an ancient maid,
Her wrinkled form in black and white arrayed;
With stores of prayers, for mornings, nights, and noons,
Her hand is filled; her bosom with lampoons.
There Affectation, with a sickly mien,
Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen,
Practised to lisp, and hang the head aside,
Faints into airs, and languishes with pride,
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe,
Wrapped in a gown, for sickness, and for show.
The fair ones feel such maladies as these,
When each new night-dress gives a new disease.
A constant vapour o'er the palace flies;
Strange phantoms rising as the mists arise;
Dreadful, as hermit's dreams in haunted shades,
Or bright, as visions of expiring maids.
Now glaring fiends, and snakes on rolling spires,
Pale spectres, gaping tombs, and purple fires;

---

[1] *Atalantis.* A popular romance of the period.
[2] *date.* End, fatal day.
[3] *Spleen.* Ill humor.
[4] *Megrim.* Low spirits.
[5] *wait.* Attend upon.

Now lakes of liquid gold, Elysian scenes,
And crystal domes, and angels in machines.[1]

Unnumbered throngs on every side are seen,
Of bodies changed to various forms by Spleen.
Here living tea-pots stand, one arm held out,
One bent; the handle this, and that the spout.
A pipkin[2] there, like Homer's tripod, walks;
Here sighs a jar, and there a goose-pie talks.

Safe passed the gnome through this fantastic band,
A branch of healing spleenwort in his hand.
Then thus addressed the power: "Hail, wayward queen!
Who rule the sex, to fifty from fifteen:
Parent of vapours and of female wit;
Who give th' hysteric, or poetic fit;
On various tempers act by various ways,
Make some take physic, others scribble plays;
Who cause the proud their visits to delay,
And send the godly in a pet to pray.
A nymph there is, that all thy power disdains,
And thousands more in equal mirth maintains.
But oh! if e'er thy gnome could spoil a grace,
Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,
Like citron-waters matrons' cheeks inflame,
Or change complexions at a losing game.
Or caus'd suspicion when no soul was rude,
Or discompos'd the head-dress of a prude,
Or e'er to costive lap-dog gave disease,
Which not the tears of brightest eyes could ease:
Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin;
That single act gives half the world the spleen."

The goddess with a discontented air
Seems to reject him, though she grants his prayer.
A wondrous bag with both her hands she binds,
Like that where once Ulysses held the winds;
There she collects the force of female lungs,
Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of tongues.
A vial next she fills with fainting fears,
Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears;
The gnome rejoicing bears her gifts away,
Spreads his black wings, and slowly mounts to day.

Sunk in Thalestris'[3] arm the nymph he found,
Her eyes dejected and her hair unbound.
Full o'er their heads the swelling bag he rent,
And all the furies issued at the vent.
Belinda burns with more than mortal ire
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising fire.
"O wretched maid!" she spread her hands and cried,
(While Hampton's echoes, "Wretched maid!" replied)
"Was it for this you took such constant care
The bodkin, comb, and essence to prepare?
For this your locks in paper durance bound,
For this with torturing irons wreathed around?
For this with fillets strained your tender head,
And bravely bore the double loads of lead?[4]
Gods! shall the ravisher display your hair,
While the fops envy, and the ladies stare!
Honour forbid! at whose unrivalled shrine
Ease, pleasure, virtue, all our sex resign.
Methinks already I your tears survey,
Already hear the horrid things you say,
Already see you a degraded toast,[5]
And all your honour in a whisper lost!
How shall I, then, your helpless fame defend?
'Twill then be infamy to seem your friend!
And shall this prize, th' inestimable prize,
Exposed through crystal to the gazing eyes,
And heightened by the diamond's circling rays,
On that rapacious hand forever blaze?

---

[1] *machines.* Stage machinery.
[2] *pipkin.* Earthen pot.
[3] *Thalestris.* Stands for Mrs. Morley, sister of Sir George Brown, the "Sir Plume" of line 117.
[4] Lead curl-papers.
[5] *toast.* Subject of toasts at dinner-parties.

but humorous satire · [illegible] [illegible]
incongruous [illegible]

Sooner shall grass in Hyde Park Circus[1] grow,
And wits take lodgings in the sound of Bow;[2]
Sooner let earth, air, sea, to chaos fall,
Men, monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots, perish all!"
  She said; then raging to Sir Plume repairs,
And bids her beau demand the precious hairs
(Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded[3] cane).
With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,
He first the snuff-box opened, then the case,
And thus broke out—"My lord, why, what the devil?
Zounds! damn the lock! 'fore God, you must be civil!
Plague on't! 'tis past a jest—nay prithee, pox!
Give her the hair," he spoke, and rapped his box.
"It grieves me much," replied the peer again,
"Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain.
But by this lock, this sacred lock, I swear,
(Which never more shall join its parted hair;
Which never more its honours shall renew,
Clipped from the lovely head where late it grew)
That while my nostrils draw the vital air,
This hand, which won it, shall forever wear."
He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph spread
The long-contended honours of her head.
  But Umbriel, hateful gnome! forbears not so;
He breaks the vial whence the sorrows flow.
Then see! the nymph in beauteous grief appears,
Her eyes half languishing, half drowned in tears;
On her heaved bosom hung her drooping head,
Which, with a sigh, she raised; and thus she said:
"Forever curs'd be this detested day,
Which snatched my best, my favourite curl away!
Happy! ah, ten times happy had I been,
If Hampton Court these eyes had never seen!
Yet am not I the first mistaken maid,
By love of courts to numerous ills betrayed.
Oh, had I rather unadmired remained
In some lone isle or distant northern land;
Where the gilt chariot never marks the way,
Where none learn ombre, none e'er taste bohea![4]
There kept my charms concealed from mortal eye,
Like roses, that in deserts bloom and die.
What moved my mind with youthful lords to roam?
Oh, had I stayed, and said my prayers at home!
'Twas this, the morning omens seemed to tell:
Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-box[5] fell;
The tottering china shook without a wind;
Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind!
A sylph, too, warned me of the threats of fate,
In mystic visions, now believed too late!
See the poor remnants of these slighted hairs!
My hands shall rend what e'en thy rapine spares;
These in two sable ringlets taught to break,
Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck;
The sister lock now sits uncouth, alone,
And in its fellow's fate foresees its own;
Uncurled it hangs, the fatal shears demands,
And tempts once more thy sacrilegious hands.
Oh, hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!"

CANTO V

She said: the pitying audience melt in tears.
But Fate and Jove had stopped the baron's ears.

---

[1] *Hyde Park Circus.* The "Ring" of Canto 1, line 44.
[2] *Bow.* The bells of the church of St. Mary-le-Bow, in the heart of London.
[3] *clouded.* Mottled.
[4] *bohea.* A kind of tea.
[5] *patch-box.* Box for face-patches.

In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,
For who can move when fair Belinda fails?
Not half so fixed the Trojan[1] could remain,
While Anna begged and Dido raged in vain.
Then grave Clarissa graceful waved her fan;
Silence ensued, and thus the nymph began:
"Say, why are beauties praised and honoured most,
The wise man's passion, and the vain man's toast?
Why decked with all that land and sea afford,
Why angels called, and angel-like adored?
Why round our coaches crowd the white-gloved beaux,
Why bows the side-box from its inmost rows?
How vain are all these glories, all our pains,
Unless good sense preserve what beauty gains;
That men may say, when we the front-box grace,
'Behold the first in virtue as in face!'
Oh! if to dance all night, and dress all day,
Charmed the small-pox, or chased old age away,
Who would not scorn what housewife's cares produce,
Or who would learn one earthly thing of use?
To patch, nay ogle, might become a saint,
Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint.
But since, alas! frail beauty must decay;
Curled or uncurled, since locks will turn to grey;
Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,
And she who scorns a man must die a maid;
What then remains but well our power to use,
And keep good humour still, whate'er we lose?
And trust me, dear! good humour can prevail,
When airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding fail.
Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll;
Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul."
So spoke the dame, but no applause ensued;
Belinda frowned, Thalestris called her prude.
"To arms, to arms!" the fierce virago cries,
And swift as lightning to the combat flies.
All side in parties, and begin th' attack;
Fans clap, silks rustle, and tough whale-bones crack;
Heroes' and heroines' shouts confus'dly rise,
And bass and treble voices strike the skies.
No common weapons in their hands are found,
Like gods they fight, nor dread a mortal wound.
So when bold Homer makes the gods engage,
And heavenly breasts with human passions rage;
'Gainst Pallas, Mars, Latona, Hermes arms;
And all Olympus rings with loud alarms:
Jove's thunder roars, Heaven trembles all around,
Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing deeps resound:
Earth shakes her nodding towers, the ground gives way,
And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day!
Triumphant Umbriel on a sconce's[2] height
Clapped his glad wings, and sat to view the fight;
Propped on their bodkin spears, the sprites survey
The growing combat, or assist the fray.
While through the press enraged Thalestris flies,
And scatters death around from both her eyes,
A beau and witling perished in the throng,
One died in metaphor, and one in song.
"O cruel nymph! a living death I bear,"
Cried Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.
A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast,
"Those eyes are made so killing"[3]—was his last.
Thus on Mæander's flowery margin lies
Th' expiring swan, and as he sings he dies.

---

[1] *the Trojan.* Æneas.

[2] *sconce.* Chandelier.

[3] The words are from a song in a contemporary opera.

When bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa down,
Chloe stepped in and killed him with a frown;
She smiled to see the doughty hero slain,
But, at her smile, the beau revived again.
Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air,
Weighs the men's wits against the lady's hair;
The doubtful beam long nods from side to side;
At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside.
See, fierce Belinda on the Baron flies,
With more than usual lightning in her eyes;
Nor feared the chief th' unequal fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his foe to die.
But this bold lord with manly strength endued,
She with one finger and a thumb subdued:
Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw;
The gnomes direct, to every atom just,
The pungent grains of titillating dust.
Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows,
And the high dome re-echoes to his nose.
"Now meet thy fate," incensed Belinda cried,
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.
(The same, his ancient personage to deck,
Her great great grandsire wore about his neck,
In three seal-rings; which after, melted down,
Formed a vast buckle for his widow's gown;
Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,
The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;
Then in a bodkin graced her mother's hairs,
Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears.)
"Boast not my fall," he cried, "insulting foe!
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low;
Nor think to die dejects my lofty mind:
All that I dread is leaving you behind!
Rather than so, ah, let me still survive,
And burn in Cupid's flames—but burn alive."

mock heroic.

"Restore the lock!" she cries; and all around
"Restore the lock!" the vaulted roofs rebound.
Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain
Roared for the handkerchief that caused his pain.
But see how oft ambitious aims are crossed,
And chiefs contend till all the prize is lost!
The lock, obtained with guilt, and kept with pain,
In every place is sought, but sought in vain:
With such a prize no mortal must be blessed,
So Heaven decrees! with Heaven who can contest?
Some thought it mounted to the lunar sphere,
Since all things lost on earth are treasured there.
There heroes' wits are kept in ponderous vases,
And beaux' in snuff-boxes and tweezer cases;
There broken vows and death-bed alms are found,
And lovers' hearts with ends of riband bound,
The courtier's promises, and sick man's prayers,
The smiles of harlots, and the tears of heirs,
Cages for gnats, and chains to yoke a flea,
Dried butterflies, and tomes of casuistry.
But trust the Muse—she saw it upward rise,
Though marked by none but quick, poetic eyes:
(So Rome's great founder to the heavens withdrew,
To Proculus alone confessed in view[1])
A sudden star, it shot through liquid air
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
Not Berenice's locks[2] first rose so bright,
The heavens bespangling with dishevelled light.
The sylphs behold it kindling as it flies,
And pleased pursue its progress through the skies.

[illegible]

---

[1] Romulus, after being carried to heaven, appeared to Proculus in a glorious "theophany."

[2] Berenice, wife of Ptolemy III, dedicated her hair in a vow for her husband's safe return. When it disappeared from the temple where it had been deposited, it was said to have been taken to the heavens to form the constellation called Berenice's hair.

This the beau monde shall from the Mall[1] survey,
And hail with music its propitious ray.
This the blest lover shall for Venus take,
And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake.
This Partridge[2] soon shall view in cloudless skies,
When next he looks through Galileo's eyes;
And hence th' egregious wizard shall foredoom
The fate of Louis and the fall of Rome.
Then cease, bright nymph! to mourn thy ravished hair,
Which adds new glory to the shining sphere!
Not all the tresses that fair head can boast,
Shall draw such envy as the lock you lost.
For, after all the murders of your eye,
When, after millions slain, yourself shall die;
When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
And all those tresses shall be laid in dust:
This lock, the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.

(1714)

THE PAINTER WHO PLEASED NOBODY AND EVERYBODY

JOHN GAY

So very like a painter drew,
That every eye the picture knew.
He hit complexion, feature, air,
So just, the life itself was there.
No flattery with his colors laid
To bloom restored the faded maid;
He gave each muscle all its strength,—
The mouth, the chin, the nose's length;
His honest pencil touched with truth,
And marked the date of age and youth.
He lost his friends, his practice failed;
Truth should not always be revealed.
In dusty piles his pictures lay,
For no one sent the second pay.[3]
Two bustos,[4] fraught with every grace,
A Venus' and Apollo's face,
He placed in view; resolved to please,
Whoever sat he drew from these,
From these corrected every feature,
And spirited each awkward creature.
All things were set; the hour was come,
His palette ready o'er his thumb.
My lord appeared, and, seated right,
In proper attitude and light,
The painter looked, he sketched the piece,
Then dipped his pencil,—talked of Greece,
Of Titian's tints, of Guido's air.
"Those eyes, my lord, the spirit there
Might well a Raphael's hand require,
To give them all the native fire;
The features, fraught with sense and wit,
You'll grant, are very hard to hit;
But yet with patience you shall view
As much as paint and art can do."
Observe the work. My lord replied,
"Till now I thought my mouth was wide;
Besides, my nose is somewhat long;
Dear sir, for me 'tis far too young."
"Oh, pardon me," the artist cried;
"In this we painters must decide.
The piece ev'n common eyes must strike,—
I warrant it extremely like."
My lord examined it anew;
No looking-glass seemed half so true.
A lady came; with borrowed grace,
He from his Venus formed her face.
Her lover praised the painter's art;
So like the picture in his heart!
To every age some charm he lent;
Ev'n beauties were almost content.
Through all the town his art they praised;
His custom grew, his price was raised.
Had he the real likeness shown,
Would any man the picture own?
But, when thus happily he wrought,
Each found the likeness in his thought.

(1727)

THE PEACOCK, THE TURKEY, AND THE GOOSE

JOHN GAY

In beauty faults conspicuous grow;
The smallest speck is seen on snow.
As near a barn, by hunger led,
A peacock with the poultry fed,
All viewed him with an envious eye,
And mocked his gaudy pageantry.
He, conscious of superior merit,
Contemns their base reviling spirit,
His state and dignity assumes,
And to the sun displays his plumes.

---

[1] *Mall.* A walk in St. James's Park, where was also the lake of line 136.

[2] *Partridge.* An almanac-maker and astrologer of the period.

[3] Sitters would pay a deposit, but refuse to send more money when they saw the work.

[4] *bustos.* Busts.

Which, like the heavens' o'erarching skies,
Are spangled with a thousand eyes.
The circling rays and varied light
At once confound their dazzled sight;
On every tongue detraction burns,
And malice prompts their spleen by turns.
"Mark with what insolence and pride
The creature takes his haughty stride,"
The turkey cries. "Can spleen contain?[1]
Sure never bird was half so vain!
But, were intrinsic merit seen,
We turkeys have the whiter skin!"
From tongue to tongue they caught abuse;
And next was heard the hissing goose:
"What hideous legs! what filthy claws!
I scorn to censure little flaws.
Then what a horrid squealing throat!
Ev'n owls are frighted at the note."
"True; those are faults," the peacock cries;
"My scream, my shanks, you may despise;
But such blind critics rail in vain.
What! overlook my radiant train!
Know, did my legs—your scorn and sport—
The turkey or the goose support,
And did ye scream with harsher sound,
Those faults in you had ne'er been found.
To all apparent beauties blind,
Each blemish strikes an envious mind."
Thus in assemblies have I seen
A nymph of brightest charms and mien
Wake envy in each ugly face,
And buzzing scandal fills the place.

(1727)

epic quality
trochaic tetrameter with
heroic quality,
last syllable accented -

regular rhythm

BOADICEA

WILLIAM COWPER

[Boadicea was Queen of a tribe of Britons. After the death of her husband she quarreled with the Romans, was publicly flogged by them, and led an uprising against their authority. For a time she was successful, but subsequently was defeated and committed suicide. Cowper makes the Druid prophesy the glories of modern Britain.]

When the British warrior queen, a
Bleeding from the Roman rods, b
Sought, with an indignant mien, a
Counsel of her country's gods, b

Sage beneath a spreading oak
Sat the Druid, hoary chief,
Every burning word he spoke
Full of rage and full of grief:

"Princess! if our aged eyes
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,
'Tis because resentment ties
All the terrors of our tongues.

"Rome shall perish,—write that word
In the blood that she has spilt;
Perish hopeless and abhorred,
Deep in ruin as in guilt.

"Rome, for empire far renowned,
Tramples on a thousand states;
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground,—
Hark! the Gaul is at her gates.

"Other Romans shall arise,
Heedless of a soldier's name;
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,
Harmony the path to fame.[2]

"Then the progeny that springs
From the forests of our land,
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,
Shall a wider world command.

"Regions Cæsar never knew
Thy posterity shall sway,
Where his eagles never flew,[3]
None invincible as they."

Such the bard's prophetic words,
Pregnant with celestial fire,
Bending as he swept the chords
Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch's pride,
Felt them in her bosom glow,—
Rushed to battle, fought and died,—
Dying, hurled them at the foe.

"Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
Heaven awards the vengeance due;
Empire is on us bestowed,—
Shame and ruin wait for you!"

(1782)

---

[1] *spleen contain*. Indignation be restrained.

[2] Referring to the days when Italy should be famed for the arts instead of warfare.

[3] *eagles*. The Roman standards (bronze eagles).

with accent
last word
a pause
everyline [illegible]
a unit.

patriotic inspiration of poem

TAM O' SHANTER

ROBERT BURNS

[Alloway Kirk (Church) was a ruin standing near the "auld Brig o' Doon" (old bridge over the Doon), not far from Burns's birthplace. The legend of this poem he used to relate as current in the neighborhood.]

When chapman billies[1] leave the street,
And drouthy[2] neibors neibors meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
And folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit bousin at the nappy,[3]
An' getting fou[4] and unco[5] happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps,[6] and stiles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae[7] night did canter:
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonie lasses).

O Tam! had'st thou but been sae wise,
As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee well thou was a skellum,[8]
A bletherin,[9] blusterin, drunken blellum;[10]
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober;
That ilka melder[11] wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd[12] a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roarin fou on;
That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied that, late or soon,
Thou would be found, deep drown'd in Doon,
Or catch'd wi' warlocks[13] in the mirk,[14]
By Alloway's auld, haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,[15]
To think how mony counsels sweet,
How mony lengthen'd, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale:—Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle,[16] bleezin finely,
Wi' reamin swats[17] that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter[18] Johnie,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony:
Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' secret favours, sweet and precious:
The souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus;
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel amang the nappy:
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure;
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.—
Nae man can tether time or tide:
The hour approaches Tam maun[19] ride;
That hour, o' night's black arch the keystane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in:
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattling show'rs rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel-mounted on his grey mare, Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit[20] on thro' dub[21] and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;

---

[1] *chapman billies.* Merchant fellows.
[2] *drouthy.* Thirsty.
[3] drinking ale.
[4] *fou.* Full.
[5] *unco.* Extremely.
[6] *slaps.* Gates.
[7] *ae.* One.
[8] *skellum.* Rascal.
[9] *bletherin.* Chattering.
[10] *blellum.* Babbler.
[11] *ilka melder.* Every corn-grinding.
[12] *ca'd.* Driven.
[13] *warlocks.* Wizards.
[14] *mirk.* Dark.
[15] *gars me greet.* Makes me weep.
[16] *ingle.* Hearth-fire.
[17] *reamin swats.* Foaming ales.
[18] *Souter.* Shoemaker.
[19] *maun.* Must.
[20] *skelpit.* Hurried.
[21] *dub.* Puddle.

Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet,
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet,
Whiles glow'rin round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares.
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Where ghaists and houlets[1] nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;[2]
And past the birks[3] and meikle[4] stane,
Whare drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
And thro' the whins,[5] and by the cairn,[6]
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods,
The lightnings flash from pole to pole,
Near and more near the thunders roll;
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze,[7]
Thro' ilka bore[8] the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny,[9] we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquabae,[10] we'll face the devil!
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noodle,
Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle,[11]
But Maggie stood, right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light;
And, wow! Tam saw an unco[12] sight!

Warlocks and witches in a dance;
Nae cotillon brent[13] new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels
Put life and mettle in their heels.
A winnock-bunker[14] in the east,
There sat Auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A towzie tyke,[15] black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge;
He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,[16]
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.[17]
Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And by some devilish cantraip sleight[18]
Each in its cauld hand held a light,
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table
A murderer's banes in gibbet-airns;
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristened bairns;
A thief, new-cutted frae the rape,[19]
Wi' his last gasp his gab[20] did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' blude red-rusted:
Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted;
A garter, which a babe had strangled:
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
The grey hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',
Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowr'd,[21] amaz'd, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
The piper loud and louder blew,
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,[22]
Till ilka carlin[23] swat and reekit,[24]
And coost her duddies to the wark,[25]
And linket[26] at it in her sark![27]

Now, Tam, O Tam; had thae been queans,[28]
A' plump and strapping in their teens!
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie[29] flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen![30]
Thir[31] breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' gude blue hair,
I wad hae gien them aff my hurdies,[32]
For ae blink o' the bonie burdies![33]

---

[1] *houlets.* Owls.
[2] *smoor'd.* Smothered.
[3] *birks.* Birches.
[4] *meikle.* Huge.
[5] *whins.* Furze.
[6] *cairn.* Stone-heap.
[7] *bleeze.* Blaze.
[8] *bore.* Chink.
[9] *tippenny.* Twopenny ale.
[10] *usquabae.* Whiskey.
[11] *boddle.* Farthing.
[12] *unco.* Extraordinary.
[13] *brent.* "Brand" new.
[14] *winnock-bunker.* Window-seat.
[15] *towzie tyke.* Shaggy cur.
[16] *skirl.* Shriek.
[17] *dirl.* Rattle.
[18] *cantraip sleight.* Magic skill.
[19] *rape.* Rope.
[20] *gab.* Mouth.
[21] *glowr'd.* Stared.
[22] *cleekit.* Joined hands.
[23] *carlin.* Old woman.
[24] *swat and reekit.* Sweat and steamed.
[25] Cast off her clothes in the labor.
[26] *linket.* Tripped.
[27] *sark.* Smock.
[28] *queans.* Girls.
[29] *creeshie.* Greasy.
[30] The finest linen had 1,700 meshes to the reed.
[31] *Thir.* These.
[32] *hurdies.* Hips.
[33] *burdies.* Lasses.

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie[1] hags wad spean[2] a foal,
Lowping[3] an' flinging on a crummock,[4]
I wonder didna turn my stomach.

But Tam ken'd what was what fu' brawlie:[5]
There was ae winsome wench and walie[6]
That night enlisted in the core[7]
(Lang after ken'd on Carrick shore:
For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perish'd mony a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,[8]
And kept the country-side in fear);
Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,[9]
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.[10]

Ah! little ken'd thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft[11] for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots[12] ('twas a' her riches),
Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cow'r,
Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r;
To sing how Nannie lap[13] and flang
(A souple jade she was and strang),
And how Tam stood, like one bewitch'd,
And thought his very een[14] enrich'd:
Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd[15] fu' fain
And hotch'd[16] and blew wi' might and main:
Till first ae caper, syne[17] anither,
Tam tint[18] his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant all was dark:
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,[19]
When plundering herds assail their byke;[20]
As open pussie's[21] mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' mony an eldritch[22] skriech and hollo.

Ah, Tam! Ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin![23]
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane of the brig;[24]
There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross.
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient[25] a tail she had to shake!
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;[26]
But little wist she Maggie's mettle—
Ae spring brought aff her master hale,[27]
But left behind her ain grey tail:
The carlin claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha[28] this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man, and mother's son, take heed:
Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
Think ye may buy the joys owre[29] dear;
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

(1791)

Typical superstition

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

[This poem was planned by Wordsworth and Coleridge jointly, for their volume of *Lyrical Ballads.* The story was in part suggested by the dream of a friend of Coleridge's, but Wordsworth contributed the theme of the slain albatross. Coleridge afterward explained his purpose in writing the poem to be "to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith."]

ARGUMENT

How a ship having passed the Line was driven by Storms to the cold Country toward the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the Tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country.

PART I

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

---

[1] *Rigwoodie.* Bony
[2] *spean.* Wean (by disgust).
[3] *Lowping.* Leaping.
[4] *crummock.* Staff.
[5] *brawlie.* Finely.
[6] *walie.* Goodly.
[7] *core.* Company.
[8] *bear.* Barley.
[9] Short smock, of Paisley yarn.
[10] *vauntie.* Proud.
[11] *coft.* Bought.
[12] Two pounds Scotch = three shillings four-pence.
[13] *lap.* Leaped.
[14] *een.* Eyes.
[15] *fidg'd.* Fidgeted.
[16] *hotch'd.* Squirmed.
[17] *syne.* Then.
[18] *tint.* Lost.
[19] *fyke.* Clamor.
[20] *byke.* Hive.
[21] *pussie's.* The hare's.
[22] *eldritch.* Ghostly.
[23] *fairin.* Reward.
[24] *brig.* Bridge.
[25] *fient.* Devil.
[26] *ettle.* Intent.
[27] *hale.* Whole.
[28] *wha.* Whoever.
[29] *owre.* Too.

[illegible] from Ballad - work is [illegible] repetition

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off! unhand me, gray-beard loon!"
Eftsoons[1] his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk,[2] below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

"The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

"Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—"
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"And now the Storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

"With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye[3] we fled.

"And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.
figure

"And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like voices in a swound![4]

"At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

"It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

"And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!

"In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers[5] nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine."

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—
Why look'st thou so?"—"With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.

PART II

"The sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

"And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariner's hollo!

---

[1] *Eftsoons.* Immediately.
[2] *kirk.* Church.
[3] *aye.* Always (steadily).
[4] *swound.* Swoon, dream.
[5] *vespers.* Evenings.

"And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah, wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

"Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:[1]
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
allit.
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst onomat.
Into that silent sea.
allit

"Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

"All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

"Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

"Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

"The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

"About, about, in reel and rout[2]
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green and blue and white.

"And some in dreams assured were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

"And every tongue, through utter thought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

"Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

PART III

"There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye!—
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

"At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.[3]

"A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

effect?
rep line

"With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh, nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!

"With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy![4] they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

"'See! see!' (I cried) 'she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal,
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!'

"The western wave was all aflame.
The day was well-nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

"And straight the Sun was flecked with bars
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

---

[1] *uprist.* Uprose.
[2] *rout.* Tumult.
[3] *wist.* Knew.
[4] *Gramercy.* Great thanks.

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"Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?[1]

"Are those her ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that woman's mate?

"Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare, Life-in-Death, was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

"The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won! I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

"The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out.
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

[illegible] effect
weird scene

"We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb[2] above the eastern bar
The hornèd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

"One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

"Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

"The souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"—

PART IV

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand,
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown."—
"Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.[3]

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

"The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

"I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

"I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or[4] ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

"I closed my lips, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

"The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

"An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

"The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide;
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

---

[1] *gossameres.* Spider-webs.
[2] *clomb.* Climbed.
[3] That is, I am not a ghost.
[4] *or.* Before.

"Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

"Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

"Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

"O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

"The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

PART V

"Oh sleep! It is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

"The silly[1] buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

"My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

"I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

"And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear:
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

'The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,[2]
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

"And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;[3]
And the rain poured down from one black cloud;
The Moon was at its edge.

"The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

"The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

"They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

"The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up blew:
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

"The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope
But he said nought to me."—

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"—
"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

"For when it dawned—they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

---

[1] *silly.* Useless (?).

[2] *sheen.* Bright.

[3] *sedge.* Reeds (in the wind).

“Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

“Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

“And now ’twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel’s song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

“It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

“Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

“Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid; and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

“The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she ’gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

“Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

“How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

“ ‘Is it he?’ quoth one, ‘Is this the man?
By Him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

“ ‘The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.’

“The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, ‘The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.’

PART VI

First Voice

“ ‘But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?’

Second Voice

“ ‘Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast—

“ ‘If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.’

First Voice

“ ‘But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?’

Second Voice

“ ‘The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

“ ‘Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner’s trance is abated.’

“I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
’Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high,
The dead men stood together.

“All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stormy eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

“The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

"And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far north, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen—

"Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

"But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

"It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

"Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

"Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

"We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
'O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.'

"The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

"The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

"And the bay was white with silent light
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

"A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

"Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood![1]
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

"This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light;

"This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart—
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

"But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer:
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

"The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

"I saw a third—I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul,[2] he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

PART VII

"This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

"He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak stump.

"The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
'Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?'

"'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said—
'And they answered not our cheer!
The planks looked warped! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

---

[1] *rood.* Cross.

[2] *shrieve my soul.* Receive my confession (and grant absolution).

"'Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod[1] is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

"'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look'—
(The Pilot made reply)
'I am a-feared.'—'Push on, push on!'
Said the Hermit cheerily.

"The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

"Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

"Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

"Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

"I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

"I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

"And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

"'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou?'

"Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

"Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

"I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

"What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

"O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemèd there to be.

"O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk,
With a goodly company!—

"To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends
And youths and maidens gay!

"Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone; and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:[2]
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

(1798)

---

[1] *tod.* Bush.

[2] *forlorn.* Deprived.

SIMON LEE

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[This poem is one of Wordsworth's characteristic contributions to the *Lyrical Ballads*, of which he said that they were distinguished from the poetry of the day in that "the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling." Compare with this remark lines 61-68.]

In the sweet shire of Cardigan,
Not far from pleasant Ivor Hall,
An old man dwells, a little man,—
'Tis said he once was tall.
Full five-and-thirty years he lived
A running huntsman merry;
And still the centre of his cheek
Is red as a ripe cherry.

No man like him the horn could sound,
And hill and valley rang with glee
When Echo bandied, round and round,
The halloo of Simon Lee.
In those proud days he little cared
For husbandry or tillage;
To blither tasks did Simon rouse
The sleepers of the village.

He all the country could outrun,
Could leave both man and horse behind;
And often, ere the chase was done,
He reeled, and was stone-blind.
And still there's something in the world
At which his heart rejoices;
For when the chiming hounds are out,
He dearly loves their voices.

But oh the heavy change—bereft
Of health, strength, friends, and kindred, see!
Old Simon to the world is left
In liveried poverty.[1]
His master's dead, and no one now
Dwells in the Hall of Ivor;
Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead;
He is the sole survivor.

And he is lean and he is sick;
His body, dwindled and awry,
Rests upon ankles swoll'n and thick;
His legs are thin and dry.
One prop he has, and only one,—
His wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village common.

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
Not twenty paces from the door,
A scrap of land they have, but they
Are poorest of the poor.
This scrap of land he from the heath
Enclosed when he was stronger;
But what to them avails the land
Which he can till no longer?

Oft, working by her husband's side,
Ruth does what Simon cannot do;
For she, with scanty cause for pride,
Is stouter of the two.
And though you with your utmost skill
From labor could not wean them,
'Tis little, very little, all
That they can do between them.

Few months of life has he in store,
As he to you will tell,
For still,[2] the more he works, the more
Do his weak ankles swell.
My gentle reader, I perceive
How patiently you've waited,
And now I fear that you expect
Some tale will be related.

O reader! had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thought can bring,
O gentle reader! you would find
A tale in everything.
What more I have to say is short,
And you must kindly take it:
It is no tale; but, should you think,
Perhaps a tale you'll make it.

Prosaic,

One summer day I chanced to see
This old man doing all he could
To unearth the root of an old tree,
A stump of rotten wood.
The mattock tottered in his hand;
So vain was his endeavor,
That at the root of the old tree
He might have worked forever.

"You're overtasked, good Simon Lee;
Give me your tool," to him I said;
And at the word right gladly he
Received my proffered aid.
I struck, and with a single blow
The tangled root I severed,
At which the poor old man so long
And vainly had endeavored.

The tears into his eyes were brought,
And thanks and praises seemed to run
So fast out of his heart, I thought
They never would have done.
—I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning;
Alas! the gratitude of men
Hath oftener left me mourning.

(1798)

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[1] That is, in poverty, though still wearing the livery of his former employer.

[2] *still*. Always.

BISHOP HATTO

ROBERT SOUTHEY

[The legend of Bishop Hatto is attached to an historic Archbishop of Mentz, Germany, and the supposed date is about A.D. 914.]

The summer and autumn had been so wet
That in winter the corn was growing yet;
'Twas a piteous sight to see all around
The grain lie rotting on the ground.

Every day the starving poor
Crowded around Bishop Hatto's door,
For he had a plentiful last-year's store,
And all the neighborhood could tell
His granaries were furnished well.

At last Bishop Hatto appointed a day
To quiet the poor without delay;
He bade them to his great barn repair,
And they should have food for the winter there.

Rejoiced such tidings good to hear,
The poor folk flocked from far and near;
The great barn was full as it could hold
Of women and children, and young and old.

Then when he saw it could hold no more,
Bishop Hatto he made fast the door;
And while for mercy on Christ they call,
He set fire to the barn and burnt them all.

"I' faith 'tis an excellent bonfire!" quoth he,
"And the country is greatly obliged to me
For ridding it, in these times forlorn,
Of rats that only consume the corn."

So then to his palace returnèd he,
And he sat down to supper merrily,
And he slept that night like an innocent man;
But Bishop Hatto never slept again.

In the morning, as he entered the hall
Where his picture hung against the wall,
A sweat like death all over him came,
For the Rats had eaten it out of the frame.

As he looked, there came a man from his farm,—
He had a countenance white with alarm:
"My lord, I opened your granaries this morn,
And the Rats had eaten all your corn."

Another came running presently,
And he was pale as pale could be.
"Fly, my Lord Bishop, fly!" quoth he.
"Ten thousand Rats are coming this way;—
The Lord forgive you for yesterday!"

"I'll go to my tower on the Rhine," replied he;
"'Tis the safest place in Germany.
The walls are high, and the shores are steep,
And the stream is strong and the water deep."

Bishop Hatto fearfully hastened away,
And he crossed the Rhine without delay,
And reached his tower, and barred with care
All the windows, doors, and loopholes there.

He laid him down and closed his eyes;—
But soon a scream made him arise.
He started, and saw two eyes of flame
On his pillow from whence the screaming came.

He listened and looked,—it was only the cat;
But the Bishop he grew more fearful for that,
For she sat screaming, mad with fear,
At the army of Rats that were drawing near.

For they have swam over the river so deep,
And they have climbed the shores so steep,
And up the tower their way is bent,
To do the work for which they were sent.

They are not to be told[1] by the dozen or score;
By thousands they come, and by myriads and more.
Such numbers had never been heard of before,—
Such a judgment had never been witnessed of yore.

Down on his knees the Bishop fell,
And faster and faster his beads did he tell,
As louder and louder drawing near
The gnawing of their teeth he could hear.

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[1] *told.* Counted.

And in at the windows, and in at the door,
And through the walls helter-skelter they pour,
And down from the ceiling, and up through the floor,
From the right and the left, from behind and before,
From within and without, from above and below;
And all at once to the Bishop they go.

They have whetted their teeth against the stones,
And now they pick the Bishop's bones.
They gnawed the flesh from every limb,
For they were sent to do judgment on him!

(1799)

LUCY GRAY

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
—The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, Father! will I gladly do:
'Tis scarcely afternoon—
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!"

At this the Father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot-band;
He plied his work;—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb:
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At daybreak on the hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept—and, turning homeward, cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet;"
—When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day,
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

(1800)

MICHAEL

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Of this poem Wordsworth wrote: "The sheep-fold, on which so much of the poem turns, remains, or rather the ruins of it. The character and circumstances of Luke were taken from a family to whom had belonged, many years before, the house we lived in at Town-end,"—that is, at Grasmere.]

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.

But, courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that simple object appertains
A story—unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved; not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this tale, while I was yet a boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly, indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, he heard the South
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
"The winds are now devising work for me!"
And, truly, at all times the storm, that drives
The traveler to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the heights.
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air; hills, which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honorable gain;
Those fields, those hills—what could they less?—had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.
  His days had not been passed in singleness.
His helpmate was a comely matron, old—
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
Of antique form; this large, for spinning wool;
That small, for flax; and if one wheel had rest

It was because the other was at work.
The pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling[1] o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only son,
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The son and father were come home, even then
Their labor did not cease; unless when all
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal
Was ended, Luke (for so the son was named)
And his old father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card
Wool for the housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.
Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
That in our ancient uncouth country style
With huge and black projection overbrowed
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the housewife hung a lamp;
An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn—and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had found
And left the couple neither gay, perhaps,
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,
There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
Father and son, while far into the night
The housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighborhood,
And was a public symbol of the life
That thrifty pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the house itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named The Evening Star.
Thus living on through such a length of years,
The shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his helpmate; but to Michael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all—
Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.
And, in a later time, ere yet the boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,

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[1] *telling.* Counting.

To have the young one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched
Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade
Chosen from the shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The Clipping Tree, a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.
  And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up
A healthy lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old;
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the boy; wherewith equipped
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;
And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his father hire of praise;
Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.
  But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts, and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the boy there came
Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old man's heart seemed born again?
  Thus in his father's sight the boy grew up:
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

  While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the shepherd had been bound
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had pressed upon him; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,

There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him;—but
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where everyone is poor,
What can be gained?"
At this the old man paused,
And Isabel was silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
"There's Richard Bateman," thought she to herself,
"He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbors bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And at his birth-place built a chapel, floored
With marble which he sent from foreign lands."
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old man was glad,
And thus resumed: "Well, Isabel! this scheme
These two days has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger;—but this hope is a good hope.
Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:—
If he *could* go, the boy should go to-night."
Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the last two nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go:
We have no other child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy father he will die."
The youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.
With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in spring. At length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the boy;
To which requests were added that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more

The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbors round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old man said,
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

  Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a sheepfold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked:
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped,
And thus the old man spake to him: "My son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories: 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should touch
On things thou canst not know of. After thou
First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls
To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke; among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old man grasped his hand,
And said, "Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good father; and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together: here they lived,
As all their forefathers had done; and when
At length their time was come, they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wished that thou shouldst live the life they lived:
But 'tis a long time to look back, my son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burdened[1] when they came to me;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
It looks as if it never could endure
Another master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou shouldst go."
                    At this the old man paused;

[1] *burdened.* Mortgaged.

Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
"This was a work for us; and now, my son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, boy, be of good hope;—we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part;
I will do mine. I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face. Heaven bless thee, boy!
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes; it should be so—yes—yes—
I know that thou couldst never have a wish
To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love: when thou art gone,
What will be left to us!—But I forget
My purposes. Lay now the cornerstone,
As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my son,
And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee; amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
May'st bear in mind the life thy fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now fare thee well—
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here: a covenant
'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."
  The shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,
And, as his father had requested, laid
The first stone of the sheepfold. At the sight
The old man's grief broke from him; to his heart
He pressed his son, he kissèd him and wept;
And to the house together they returned.
—Hushed was that house in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell:—with morrow's dawn the boy
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face;
And all the neighbors, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.

  A good report did from their kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing: and the boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the housewife phrased it, were throughout
"The prettiest letters that were ever seen."
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on: and once again
The shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the sheepfold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty; and at length
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.
  There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart.
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
And listened to the wind; and, as before,

Performed all kinds of labor for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.
There, by the sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful dog,
Then old beside him lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time,
He at the building of this sheepfold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her husband: at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
The cottage which was named The Evening Star
Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighborhood:—yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door; and the remains
Of the unfinished sheepfold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.

(1800)

LOCHINVAR

(From *Marmion*, Canto V)

SIR WALTER SCOTT

Oh! young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;
And save his good broadsword he weapons had none.
He rode all unarmed and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stayed not for brake and he stopped not for stone,
He swam the Eske river where ford there was none,
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate
The bride had consented, the gallant came late:
For a laggard in love and a dastard in war
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,
Among bridesmen, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all:
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,—
For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word,—
"Oh! come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"—

"I long wooed your daughter, my suit you denied;
Love swells like the Solway,[1] but ebbs like its tide—
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar."

The bride kissed the goblet: the knight took it up,
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She looked down to blush, and she looked up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand ere her mother could bar,—
"Now tread we a measure!" said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard[2] did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume;
And the bride-maidens whispered, "'Twere better by far
To have matched our fair cousin with young Lochinvar."

[1] The Solway Firth is noted for swiftly changing tides.
[2] *galliard.* A dance.

One touch to her hand and one word in her ear,
When they reached the hall-door, and the charger stood near;
So light to the croupe[1] the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
"She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;[2]
They'll have fleet steeds that follow," quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Graemes of the Netherby clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran:
There was racing and chasing on Cannobie Lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

(1808)

MARMION AND DOUGLAS

(From *Marmion*, Canto VI)

SIR WALTER SCOTT

[Marmion has been sent as an envoy from Henry VIII of England to James IV of Scotland, who has defied the southern ruler. James receives Marmion and sends him to Tantallon Castle, the hall of Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, who is remaining behind the Scottish army. Presently, learning that the Scots have crossed into England, Marmion leaves Tantallon under a safe conduct to join the English.]

Not far advanced was morning day
When Marmion did his troop array
To Surrey's camp to ride;
He had safe-conduct for his band
Beneath the royal seal and hand,
And Douglas gave a guide.
The ancient earl with stately grace
Would Clara on her palfrey place,
And whispered in an undertone,
"Let the hawk stoop, his prey is flown."
The train from out the castle drew,
But Marmion stopped to bid adieu:
"Though something I might plain,"[3] he said,
"Of cold respect to stranger guest,
Sent hither by your king's behest,
While in Tantallon's towers I stayed,
Part we in friendship from your land,
And, noble earl, receive my hand."
But Douglas round him drew his cloak,
Folded his arms, and thus he spoke:—
"My manors, halls, and bowers shall still[4]
Be open at my sovereign's will
To each one whom he lists, howe'er
Unmeet to be the owner's peer.
My castles are my king's alone,
From turret to foundation-stone,—
The hand of Douglas is his own,
And never shall in friendly grasp
The hand of such as Marmion clasp."

Burned Marmion's swarthy cheek like fire,
And shook his very frame for ire.
And—"This to me!" he said.
"An 't were not for thy hoary beard,
Such hand as Marmion's had not spared
To cleave the Douglas' head!
And first I tell thee, haughty peer,
He who does England's message here,
Although the meanest in her state,
May well, proud Angus, be thy mate;
And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,
Even in thy pitch of pride,
Here in thy hold, thy vassals near,—
Nay, never look upon your lord,
And lay your hands upon your sword,—
I tell thee, thou 'rt defied!

And if thou saidst I am not peer
To any lord in Scotland here,
Lowland or Highland, far or near,
Lord Angus, thou hast lied!"
On the earl's cheek the flush of rage
O'ercame the ashen hue of age;
Fierce he broke forth,—"And darest thou then
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall?
And hopest thou hence unscathed to go?—
No, by Saint Bride of Bothwell, no!
Up drawbridge, grooms—what, warder, ho!
Let the portcullis fall!"

Lord Marmion turned,—well was his need,—
And dashed the rowels[5] in his steed,
Like arrow through the archway sprung,—
The ponderous grate behind him rung;

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[1] *croupe*. The horse's back behind the saddle.
[2] *scaur*. Cliff.
[3] *plain*. Complain.
[4] *still*. Always.
[5] *rowels*. The wheels of the spur.

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To pass there was such scanty room,
The bars descending razed his plume.
The steed along the drawbridge flies,
Just as it trembled on the rise;
Not lighter does the swallow skim
Along the smooth lake's level brim.
And when Lord Marmion reached his band,
He halts, and turns with clenched hand,
And shout of loud defiance pours,
And shook his gauntlet at the towers.

(1808)

THE BATTLE OF THE BALTIC

THOMAS CAMPBELL

[The Battle of Copenhagen was fought April 2, 1801, to break up Napoleon's plan for a coalition of the northern powers against England. Nelson led a detachment of the British fleet; the Danes were commanded by the Crown Prince. Captain Riou, in command of the British frigates, was killed.]

Of Nelson and the North
Sing the glorious day's renown,
When to battle fierce came forth
All the might of Denmark's crown,
And her arms along the deep proudly shone;
By each gun the lighted brand
In a bold determined hand,
And the Prince of all the land
Led them on.

Like leviathans afloat
Lay their bulwarks on the brine;
While the sign of battle flew
On the lofty British line:
It was ten of April morn by the chime.
As they drifted on their path
There was silence deep as death;
And the boldest held his breath
For a time.

For the might of England flushed
To anticipate the scene;
And her van the fleeter rushed
O'er the deadly space between.
"Hearts of oak!" our captains cried, when each gun
From its adamantine lips
Spread a death-shade round the ships,
Like the hurricane eclipse
Of the sun.
Again! again! again!
And the havoc did not slack,
Till a feeble cheer the Dane
To our cheering sent us back;—
Their shots along the deep slowly boom;—
Then ceased—and all is wail,
As they strike the shattered sail,
Or in conflagration pale
Light the gloom.

Out spoke the victor then
As he hailed them o'er the wave:
"Ye are brothers! ye are men!
And we conquer but to save;
So peace instead of death let us bring.
But yield, proud foe, thy fleet
With the crews, at England's feet,
And make submission meet
To our king."

Then Denmark blessed our chief,
That he gave her wounds repose;
And the sounds of joy and grief
From her people wildly rose,
As death withdrew his shades from the day;
While the sun looked smiling bright
O'er a wide and woeful sight,
Where the fires of funeral light
Died away.

Now joy, old England, raise!
For the tidings of thy might,
By the festal cities' blaze,
Whilst the wine-cup shines in light;
And yet amidst that joy and uproar,
Let us think of them that sleep
Full many a fathom deep
By the wild and stormy steep,
Elsinore![1]

Brave hearts! to Britain's pride
Once so faithful and so true,
On the deck of fame that died,
With the gallant good Riou;
Soft sigh the winds of heaven o'er their grave!
While the billow mournful rolls,
And the mermaid's song condoles,
Singing glory to the souls
Of the brave!

(1809)

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[1] The fortress of Helsingfors, commanding the entrance to the Baltic.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

LORD BYRON

[This poem is one of a number of "Hebrew Melodies," and is imagined to have been sung by the Hebrews in the days of King Hezekiah; see *2 Kings,* 18-19.]

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

(1815)

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON

[An actual "prisoner of Chillon" existed in the person of François de Bonnivard, who, imbued with republican ideas, resisted the rule of the Duke of Savoy and was imprisoned from 1530 to 1536. He was confined in the castle of Chillon, on the shore of Lake Geneva (or Leman). The success of the republican cause brought about his release. Byron has supplied the two brothers, their deaths, and the story of the prisoner's life.] general [illegible]

My hair is gray, but not with years, a
anapestic Nor grew it white b
In a single night, b
As men's have grown from sudden fears; a
My limbs are bowed, though not with toil, c
But rusted with a vile repose, d
For they have been a dungeon's spoil, c
And mine has been the fate of those d
To whom the goodly earth and air e
Are banned, and barred—forbidden fare. e
But this was for my father's faith
I suffered chains and courted death;
That father perished at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling-place;
We were seven—who now are one,
Six in youth, and one in age,
Finished as they had begun,
Proud of Persecution's rage;
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have sealed,
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould,
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and gray,
Dim with a dull imprisoned ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:
And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise

lines end in accented syllable
and begins with [illegible]

For years—I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score,
When my last brother drooped and died,
And I lay living by his side.

They chained us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight:
And thus together—yet apart,
Fettered in hand, but joined in heart,
'Twas still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope, or legend old,
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
A grating sound, not full and free,
As they of yore were wont to be;
It might be fancy, but to me
They never sounded like our own.

I was the eldest of the three,
And to uphold and cheer the rest
I ought to do—and did my best—
And each did well in his degree.
The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him, with eyes as blue as heaven—
For him my soul was sorely moved;
And truly might it be distressed
To see such bird in such a nest;
For he was beautiful as day—
(When day was beautiful to me
As to young eagles, being free)
A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for nought but others' ills,
And then they flowed like mountain rills,
Unless he could assuage the woe
Which he abhorred to view below.

The other was as pure of mind,
But formed to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perished in the foremost rank
With joy:—but not in chains to pine:
His spirit withered with their clank,
I saw it silently decline—
And so perchance in sooth did mine:
But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had followed there the deer and wolf;
To him this dungeon was a gulf,
And fettered feet the worst of ills.

Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls:
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
Which round about the wave inthrals:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made—and like a living grave.
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay:
We heard it ripple night and day;
Sounding o'er our heads it knocked;
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high
And wanton in the happy sky;
And then the very rock hath rocked,
And I have felt it shake, unshocked,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food;
It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunter's fare,
And for the like had little care:
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captives' tears
Have moistened many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den;
But what were these to us or him?
These wasted not his heart or limb;
My brother's soul was of that mould
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side.
But why delay the truth?—he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,—
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died, and they unlocked his chain,
And scooped for him a shallow grave
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begged them as a boon to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day

Might shine—it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer—
They coldly laughed, and laid him there:
The flat and turfless earth above
The being we so much did love;
His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument!

But he, the favourite and the flower,
Most cherished since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyred father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be
Less wretched now, and one day free;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired—
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was withered on the stalk away.
Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood;
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread:
But these were horrors—this was woe
Unmixed with such—but sure and slow:
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender, kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray;
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright;
And not a word of murmur, not
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence—lost
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less.
I listened, but I could not hear;
I called, for I was wild with fear:
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonishèd;
I called, and thought I heard a sound—
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rushed to him:—I found him not,
I only stirred in this black spot,
I only lived, *I* only drew
The accursèd breath of dungeon-dew;
The last, the sole, the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath—
My brothers—both had ceased to breathe:
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive—
A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.
I know not why
I could not die,
I had no earthly hope—but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death.

What next befell me then and there
I know not well—I never knew—
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too:
I had no thought, no feeling—none—
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,[1]
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and gray;
It was not night, it was not day;
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness without a place;
There were no stars, no earth, no time,
No check, no change, no good, no crime,
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

A light broke in upon my brain,—
It was the carol of a bird;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track;
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,

[1] *wist.* Knew.

But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perched, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seemed to say them all for me!
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
It seemed like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
But knowing well captivity,
Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in wingèd guise,
A visitant from Paradise;
For—Heaven forgive that thought! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile—
I sometimes deemed that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 'twas mortal well I knew,
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone,
Lone as the corse within its shroud,
Lone as a solitary cloud,—
A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

A kind of change came in my fate,
My keepers grew compassionate;
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was:—my broken chain
With links unfastened did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one,
Returning where my walk begun,
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crushed heart fell blind and sick.
I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me:
No child, no sire, no kin had I,
No partner in my misery;
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barred windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye.

I saw them, and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channelled rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-walled distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down;
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seemed no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,
Of gentle breath and hue.
The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seemed joyous each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seemed to fly;
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled—and would fain
I had not left my recent chain.
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save,—
And yet my glance, too much opprest,
Had almost need of such a rest.

It might be months, or years, or days,
I kept no count, I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
And clear them of their dreary mote;
At last men came to set me free;
I asked not why, and recked not where;

It was at length the same to me,
Fettered or fetterless to be,
I learned to love despair.
And thus when they appeared at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage—and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home:
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watched them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learned to dwell;
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are:—even I
Regained my freedom with a sigh.

(1816)

CHRISTABEL

Part One

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

[This poem was designed to be, like the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," a study in the supernatural; see the note on page 33. Part One was written at about the same time as the more famous poem, that is, in 1797. Some time later Coleridge added a second part, which he published with the first, but it is very inferior; the concluding parts were never written. The spiritual theme of the narrative may be said to be the power of purity (symbolized in Christabel) to protect from evil (symbolized in Geraldine). The reader should notice that the supernaturally evil character of Geraldine is subtly hinted at from lines 139 to 259; she avoids stepping over the threshold because it was customary to bless thresholds as a guard against evil spirits. In Coleridge's manuscript he wrote, experimentally, a line after 252 to rime with 251: "Are lean and old and foul of hue," but rejected it for the method of vague suggestion.]

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock,
Tu-whit! Tu-whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Had a toothless mastiff, which
From her kennel beneath the rock
Maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour,
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray;
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the woods so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothèd knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal[1] of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak
But moss and rarest mistletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is she cannot tell.—
On the other side it seems to be
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek—
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Dressed in a silken robe of white,

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[1] *weal.* Welfare.

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That shadowy in the moonlight shone;
The neck that made the white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-veined feet unsandal'd were,
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly!

"Mary mother, save me now!"
(Said Christabel) "And who art thou?"

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet:—
"Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness:
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!"
Said Christabel, "How camest thou here?"
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet:[1]

"My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine:
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were white:
And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced, I wis[2])
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some muttered words his comrades spoke:
He placed me underneath this oak;
He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell—
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand" (thus ended she),
"And help a wretched maid to flee."

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,
And comforted fair Geraldine:
"O well, bright dame! may you command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth, and friends withal,
To guide and guard you safe and free
Home to your noble father's hall."
She rose: and forth with steps they passed
That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious stars the lady blest,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel:
"All our household are at rest,
The hall as silent as the cell;
Sir Leoline is weak in health,
And may not well awakened be,
But we will move as if in stealth,
And I beseech your courtesy,
This night, to share your couch with me."

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court; right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the lady by her side,
"Praise we the Virgin all divine
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!"
"Alas, alas!" said Geraldine,
"I cannot speak from weariness."
So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.

Outside her kennel, the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make!
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
Never till now she uttered yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel.
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:
For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,[3]
Pass as lightly as you will!

---

[1] *meet.* Fitting.

[2] *I wis.* I suppose (a misunderstood form of what is properly one word, "iwis," meaning "certainly").

[3] *still.* Always.

The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying;
But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.
"O softly tread," said Christabel,
"My father seldom sleepeth well."

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
And jealous of the listening air
They steal their way from stair to stair,
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
And now they pass the Baron's room,
As still as death, with stifled breath!
And now have reached her chamber door;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet;
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.
The silver lamp burns dead and dim;
But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.

"O weary lady, Geraldine,
I pray you, drink this cordial wine!
It is a wine of virtuous powers;
My mother made it of wild flowers."

"And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn?"
Christabel answered—"Woe is me!
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the gray-haired friar tell
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle-bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear! that thou wert here!"
"I would," said Geraldine, "she were!"

But soon with altered voice, said she—
"Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine![1]
I have power to bid thee flee."
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?
Can she the bodiless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
"Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me."

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—
"Alas!" said she, "this ghastly ride—
Dear lady! it hath wildered you!"
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, "'Tis over now!"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright:
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countree.

And thus the lofty lady spake—
"All they who live in the upper sky
Do love you, holy Christabel!
And you love them, and for their sake
And for the good which me befell.
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie."

Quoth Christabel, "So let it be!"
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.
But through her brain of weal and woe
So many thoughts moved to and fro,
That vain it were her lids to close;
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
And slowly rolled her eyes around;
Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shuddered, she unbound
The cincture[2] from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropp'd to her feet, and full in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side——
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

[1] *Peak and pine.* Grow thin and weak (a cursing formula).

[2] *cincture.* Girdle.

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;
Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
Then suddenly, as one defied,
Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the maiden's side!—
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah wel-a-day!
And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say:
"In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;
But vainly thou warrest,
For this is alone in
Thy power to declare,
That in the dim forest
Thou heard'st a low moaning,
And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair;
And didst bring her home with thee, in love and in charity,
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air."

It was a lovely sight to see
The Lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak tree.
Amid the jagged shadows
Of mossy leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To make her gentle vows;
Her slender palms together press'd,
Heaving sometimes on her breast;
Her face resigned to bliss or bale—
Her face, oh call it fair, not pale,
And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet, I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is—
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?
And lo! the worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine! one hour was thine—
Thou'st had thy will! By tairn[1] and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still,
But now they are jubilant anew,
From cliff and tower, tu-whoo! tu-whoo!
To-whoo! tu-whoo! from wood and fell![2]

And see! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes! and tears she sheds—
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light!

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitress,
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.
What if her guardian spirit 'twere,
What if she knew her mother near?
But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call:
For the blue sky bends over all!

(1816)

THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE

CHARLES WOLFE

[Sir John Moore led an English army against the French in Spain, 1808-1809. His forces being much smaller than the enemy's, he withdrew to the seacoast, the French following, and on January 16, 1809, engaged and repulsed them at Corunna, but was himself killed.]

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly, at dead of night,
The sods with our bayonets turning;
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
And the lantern dimly burning.

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[1] *tairn.* Lake.
[2] *fell.* Hill.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Not in sheet or in shroud we wound him,
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,
With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow;
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought, as we hollowed his narrow bed
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,
And we far away on the billow!

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him;
But little he'll reck, if they let him sleep on
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our weary task was done
When the clock struck the note for retiring;
And we heard the distant and random gun
Of the enemy sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone,
But we left him alone with his glory.

(1817)

Suggestive. romance, superstition

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

JOHN KEATS

[This poem is one of the most notable attempts to imitate the method and spirit of the ballads of medieval romance. The title, "The Beautiful Merciless Lady," Keats obtained from an old poem, attributed to Chaucer, translated from the French. It has been supposed that he symbolizes in the story his unhappy love for Fanny Brawne.]

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

Iambic tetrameter

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.—

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;[1]
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long.
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew;
And sure in language strange she said,
"I love thee true."

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept, and sighed full sore;
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four.

And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dreamed, ah woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dreamt
On the cold hill's side.

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried, "La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!"

I saw their starved lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gapèd wide—
And I awoke, and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake
And no birds sing.

(1820)

too exquisite

words too well chosen

romantic

[illegible] organized

workmanship

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[1] zone. Girdle.

Sensuousness

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

JOHN KEATS

Sight

[The feast of St. Agnes is on January 21. In Rome it is customary on that day to dedicate two lambs to the saint, and the wool of these lambs is afterward woven into priestly vestments; see lines 71, 117.]

concrete

St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's[1] fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seemed taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

touch
sight

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprisoned in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flattered to tears this aged man and poor;
But no—already had his deathbell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and sung:
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

hearing
contrast

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carvèd angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put crosswise on their breasts.

contrast

At length burst in the argent[2] revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows, haunting fairily
The brain, new stuffed, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and winged St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honeyed middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline;
The music, yearning like a god in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retired; not cooled by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was otherwhere:
She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

---

[1] *Beadsman*. One appointed to pray for a benefactor's soul.

[2] *argent*. Silvery.

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
The hallowed hour was near at hand: she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the thronged resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwinked[1] with faery fancy; all amort,[2]
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttressed from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things have been.

He ventures in: let no buzzed whisper tell:
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's feverous citadel:
For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage: not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland:
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;
They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race!

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand;
He had a fever late, and in the fit
He cursèd thee and thine, both house and land:
Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me! flit!
Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, Gossip[3] dear,
We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,
And tell me how"—"Good Saints! not here, not here;
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

He followed through a lowly archèd way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume;
And as she muttered "Well-a—well-a-day!"
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
Yet men will murder upon holy days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
To venture so: it fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!
God's help! my lady fair the conjurer plays
This very night; good angels her deceive!
But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth closed a wond'rous riddle-book,

---

[1] *Hoodwinked.* Blinded.
[2] *amort.* Dead.
[3] *Gossip.* Godmother.

As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook[1]
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his painèd heart
Made purple riot: then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
"A cruel man and impious thou art:
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"
Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face;
Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
And beard them, though they be more fanged than wolves and bears."

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken churchyard thing,
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
Were never missed." Thus plaining,[2] doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legioned fairies paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.[3]

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame;
"All cates[4] and dainties shall be storèd there
Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame[5]
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
The dame returned, and whispered in his ear
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hushed, and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.[6]
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

Her faltering hand upon the balustrade,
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmèd maid,
Rose, like a missioned[7] spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turned, and down the aged gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,

---

[1] *brook.* Restrain.
[2] *plaining.* Complaining.
[3] Merlin became a victim of one of his own magic spells.
[4] *cates.* Delicacies.
[5] *tambour frame.* Drum-shaped embroidery-frame.
[6] *amain.* Greatly.
[7] *missioned.* Sent on an angel's mission.

Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove frayed and fled.

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No uttered syllable, or woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

A casement high and triple-arched there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules[1] on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together press'd,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seemed a splendid angel, newly dress'd,
Save wings, for heaven: Porphyro grew faint:
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
Of all its wreathèd pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmèd jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees;
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in seaweed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppressed
Her soothèd limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;
Blissfully havened both from joy and pain;
Clasped like a missal[2] where swart Paynims[3] pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listened to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breathed himself: then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hushed carpet, silent, stepped,
And 'tween the curtains peeped, where, lo! how fast she slept.

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half-anguished, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—
O for some drowsy Morphean[4] amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarinet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:—
The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

---

[1] *gules.* Red (heraldic color).

[2] *missal.* Mass-book.

[3] *Swart Paynims.* Dark pagans (Moslems, in whose land a Christian book would remain closed).

[4] *Morphean.* Of Morpheus (god of dreams).

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanchèd linen, smooth, and lavendered,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother[1] than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrops, tinct[2] with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferred
From Fez; and spicèd dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.

These delicates he heaped with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathèd silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retirèd quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite;[3]
Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

Thus whispering, his warm, unnervèd arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as icèd stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam:
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
It seemed he never, never could redeem
From such a stedfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mused awhile, entoiled in woofèd[4] phantasies.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,
He played an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Province called, "La belle dame sans mercy:"[5]
Close to her ear touching the melody;—
Wherewith disturbed, she uttered a soft moan:
He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly
Her blue affrayèd[6] eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

Her eyes wide open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that nigh expelled
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep,
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;
Who knelt, with joinèd hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she looked so dreamingly.

"Ah, Porphyro!" she said, "but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear;
How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odour with the violet,—
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes: St. Agnes' moon hath set.

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'Tis dark: the icèd gusts still rave and beat:

---

[1] *soother.* Smoother.
[2] *tinct.* Flavored.
[3] *eremite.* Devotee.
[4] *woofed.* Woven.
[5] See page 61.
[6] *affrayed.* Frightened.

"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceivèd thing;—
A dove forlorn and lost with sick unprunèd wing."

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil[1] dyed?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famished pilgrim,—saved by miracle.
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

"Hark! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land,
Of haggard[2] seeming, but a boon indeed:
Arise—arise! the morning is at hand;—
The bloated wassailers[3] will never heed:—
Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
Drowned all in Rhenish[4] and the sleepy mead:
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.—
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-drooped lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
Fluttered in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide;
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
By one and one, the bolts full easy slide:—
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;—
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans. Leaving

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitched, with meagre face deform;[5]
The Beadsman, after thousand aves[6] told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

(1820)

THE RED FISHERMAN

WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED

[The date represented by this symbolic poem is evidently 1485, that of the Battle of Bosworth Field (see line 130), in which Gloucester (Richard III) met his death. The hero may be supposed to be the Abbot of Bury St. Edmunds (see line 159), a powerful monastery whose head was entitled to a seat in the House of Lords. Mistress Shore (line 199) was a favorite of the late king, Edward IV, who is doubtless referred to in line 196. The mitre, with which the devil's hook was baited for the Abbot himself, is symbol of the office of bishop.]

The Abbot arose, and closed his book,
And donned his sandal shoon,
And wandered forth alone, to look
Upon the summer moon.
A starlight sky was o'er his head,
A quiet breeze around;
And the flowers a thrilling fragrance shed,
And the waves a soothing sound:

---

[1] *vermeil.* Vermilion.
[2] *haggard.* Wild.
[3] *wassailers.* Drinking banqueters.
[4] *Rhenish.* Rhine wine.
[5] *deform.* Distorted.
[6] *aves.* Prayers to Mary.

It was not an hour nor a scene for aught
But love and calm delight;
Yet the holy man had a cloud of thought
On his wrinkled brow that night.
He gazed on the river that gurgled by,
But he thought not of the reeds;
He clasped his gilded rosary,
But he did not tell the beads;
If he looked to the heaven, 'twas not to invoke
The Spirit that dwelleth there;
If he opened his lips, the words they spoke
Had never the tone of prayer.
A pious priest might the Abbot seem,
He had swayed the crozier well;
But what was the theme of the Abbot's dream,
The Abbot were loth to tell.

Companionless, for a mile or more,
He traced the windings of the shore.
Oh, beauteous is that river still,
As it winds by many a sloping hill,
And many a dim o'erarching grove,
And many a flat and sunny cove,
And terraced lawns, whose bright arcades
The honeysuckle sweetly shades,
And rocks, whose very crags seem bowers,
So gay they are with grass and flowers!
But the Abbot was thinking of scenery
About as much, in sooth,
As a lover thinks of constancy,
Or an advocate[1] of truth.
He did not mark how the skies in wrath
Grew dark above his head;
He did not mark how the mossy path
Grew damp beneath his tread;

And nearer he came, and still more near,
To a pool, in whose recess
The water had slept for many a year,
Unchanged and motionless;
From the river stream it spread away
The space of half a rood;
The surface had the hue of clay
And the scent of human blood;
The trees and the herbs that round it grew
Were venomous and foul,
And the birds that through the bushes flew
Were the vulture and the owl;
The water was as dark and rank
As ever a Company pumped,
And the perch, that was netted and laid on the bank,
Grew rotten while it jumped;
And bold was he who thither came
At midnight, man or boy,
For the place was cursed with an evil name,
And that name was "The Devil's Decoy"!

The Abbot was weary as abbot could be,
And he sat down to rest on the stump of a tree:
When suddenly rose a dismal tone,—
Was it a song, or was it a moan?—
"O ho! O ho!
Above—below—
Lightly and brightly they glide and go!
The hungry and keen on the top are leaping;
The lazy and fat in the depths are sleeping;
Fishing is fine when the pool is muddy,
Broiling is rich when the coals are ruddy!"
In a monstrous fright, by the murky light,
He looked to the left and he looked to the right,
And what was the vision close before him,
That flung such a sudden stupor o'er him?
'Twas a sight to make the hair uprise,
And the life-blood colder run:
The startled priest struck both his thighs,
And the abbey clock struck one!

All alone, by the side of the pool,
A tall man sat on a three-legged stool,
Kicking his heels on the dewy sod,
And putting in order his reel and rod;
Red were the rags his shoulders wore,
And a high red cap on his head he bore;
His arms and his legs were long and bare;
And two or three locks of long red hair
Were tossing about his scraggy neck
Like a tattered flag o'er a splitting wreck.
It might be time, or it might be trouble,
Had bent that stout back nearly double,
Sunk in their deep and hollow sockets
That blazing couple of Congreve rockets,[2]
And shrunk and shriveled that tawny skin,
Till it hardly covered the bones within.

The line the Abbot saw him throw
Had been fashioned and formed long ages ago,
And the hands that worked his foreign vest
Long ages ago had gone to their rest:

---

[1] *advocate.* Lawyer.

[2] *Congreve rockets.* Military rockets, carrying balls like a modern shell.

You would have sworn, as you looked on them,
He had fished in the flood with Ham and Shem!

There was turning of keys, and creaking of locks,
As he took forth a bait from his iron box.
Minnow or gentle, worm or fly,—
It seemed not such to the Abbot's eye;
Gaily it glittered with jewel and gem,
And its shape was the shape of a diadem.
It was fastened a gleaming hook about
By a chain within and a chain without;
The Fisherman gave it a kick and a spin,
And the water fizzed as it tumbled in!

From the bowels of the earth,
Strange and varied sounds had birth;
Now the battle's bursting peal,
Neigh of steed, and clang of steel;
Now an old man's hollow groan
Echoed from the dungeon stone;
Now the weak and wailing cry
Of a stripling's agony![1]
Cold by this was the midnight air,
But the Abbot's blood ran colder,
When he saw a gasping knight lie there,
With a gash beneath his clotted hair,
And a hump upon his shoulder.
And the loyal churchman strove in vain
To mutter a Pater Noster;
For he who writhed in mortal pain
Was camped that night on Bosworth plain—
The cruel Duke of Gloster!

There was turning of keys, and creaking of locks,
As he took forth a bait from his iron box.
It was a haunch[2] of princely size,
Filling with fragrance earth and skies.
The corpulent Abbot knew full well
The swelling form, and the steaming smell;
Never a monk that wore a hood
Could better have guessed the very wood
Where the noble hart had stood at bay,
Weary and wounded, at close of day.

Sounded then the noisy glee
Of a reveling company,—
Sprightly story, wicked jest,
Rated[3] servant, greeted guest,
Flow of wine, and flight of cork,
Stroke of knife, and thrust of fork;
But, where'er the board was spread,
Grace, I ween, was never said!
Pulling and tugging the Fisherman sat,
And the priest was ready to vomit,
When he hauled out a gentleman, fine and fat,
With a belly as big as a brimming vat,
And a nose as red as a comet.
"A capital stew," the Fisherman said,
"With cinnamon and sherry!"
And the Abbot turned away his head,
For his brother was lying before him dead,
The Mayor of St. Edmund's Bury!

There was turning of keys, and creaking of locks,
As he took forth a bait from his iron box.
It was a bundle of beautiful things,—
A peacock's tail, and a butterfly's wings,
A scarlet slipper, an auburn curl,
A mantle of silk, and a bracelet of pearl,
And a packet of letters, from whose sweet fold
Such a stream of delicate odours rolled
That the Abbot fell on his face, and fainted,
And deemed his spirit was half-way sainted.

Sounds seemed dropping from the skies,
Stifled whispers, smothered sighs,
And the breath of vernal gales,
And the voice of nightingales:
But the nightingales were mute,
Envious, when an unseen lute
Shaped the music of its chords
Into passion's thrilling words:
"Smile, Lady, smile!—I will not set
Upon my brow the coronet,
Till thou wilt gather roses white
To wear around its gems of light.
Smile, Lady, smile!—I will not see
Rivers and Hastings bend the knee,
Till those bewitching lips of thine
Will bid me rise in bliss from mine.
Smile, Lady, smile!—for who would win
A loveless throne through guilt and sin?
Or who would reign o'er vale and hill,
If woman's heart were rebel still?"

One jerk, and there a lady lay,
A lady wondrous fair;
But the rose of her lip had faded away,
And her cheek was as white and as cold as clay,
And torn was her raven hair.

---

[1] Victims of Gloucester's cruelty.
[2] *haunch.* Of venison.
[3] *rated.* Scolded.

"Ah ha!" said the Fisher, in merry guise,
"Her gallant was hooked before:"
And the Abbot heaved some piteous sighs,
For oft he had blessed those deep blue eyes,
The eyes of Mistress Shore!

There was turning of keys, and creaking of locks,
As he took forth a bait from his iron box.
Many the cunning sportsman tried,
Many he flung with a frown aside;
A minstrel's harp, and a miser's chest,
A hermit's cowl, and a baron's crest,
Jewels of lustre, robes of price,
Tomes of heresy, loaded dice,
And golden cups of the brightest wine
That ever was pressed from the Burgundy vine.
There was a perfume of sulphur and nitre,
As he came at last to a bishop's mitre!

From top to toe the Abbot shook,
As the Fisherman armed his golden hook,
And awfully were his features wrought
By some dark dream or wakened thought.
Look how the fearful felon gazes
On the scaffold his country's vengeance raises,
When the lips are cracked and the jaws are dry
With the thirst which only in death shall die:
Mark the mariner's frenzied frown
As the swaling [1] wherry settles down,
When peril has numbed the sense and will,
Though the hand and the foot may struggle still:
Wilder far was the Abbot's glance,
Deeper far was the Abbot's trance:
Fixed as a monument, still as air,
He bent no knee, and he breathed no prayer;
But he signed—he knew not why or how—
The sign of the Cross on his clammy brow.

There was turning of keys, and creaking of locks,
As he stalked away with his iron box.
"O ho! O ho!
The cock doth crow;
It is time for the Fisher to rise and go.
Fair luck to the Abbot, fair luck to the shrine!
He hath gnawed in twain my choicest line; [2]
Let him swim to the north, let him swim to the south,
The Abbot will carry my hook in his mouth!"

The Abbot had preached for many years
With as clear articulation
As ever was heard in the House of Peers
Against Emancipation;[3]
His words had made battalions quake,
Had roused the zeal of martyrs,
Had kept the Court an hour awake,
And the King himself three quarters;
But ever from that hour, 'tis said,
He stammered and he stuttered,
As if an axe went through his head
With every word he uttered.
He stuttered o'er blessing, he stuttered o'er ban,
He stuttered, drunk or dry;
And none but he and the Fisherman
Could tell the reason why!

(1827)

THE BELLE OF THE BALL-ROOM

WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED

Years, years ago, ere yet my dreams
Had been of being wise or witty,
Ere I had done with writing themes,
Or yawned o'er this infernal Chitty;[4]
Years, years ago, while all my joys
Were in my fowling-piece and filly,—
In short, while I was yet a boy,
I fell in love with Laura Lilly.

I saw her at the County Ball:
There when the sounds of flute and fiddle
Gave signal sweet in that old hall
Of hands across and down the middle,
Hers was the subtlest spell by far
Of all that sets young hearts romancing:
She was our queen, our rose, our star;
And then she danced—oh, heaven, her dancing!

Dark was her hair, her hand was white,
Her voice was exquisitely tender,
Her eyes were full of liquid light;
I never saw a waist so slender;

---

[1] *swaling*. Disappearing.
[2] By making the sign of the cross.
[3] Catholic Emancipation, a parliamentary measure of the period when the poem was written.
[4] *Chitty*. Document.

Her every look, her every smile,
Shot right and left a score of arrows;
I thought 'twas Venus from her isle,
And wondered where she'd left her sparrows.

She talked of politics or prayers—
Of Southey's prose, or Wordsworth's sonnets,
Of danglers[1] or of dancing bears.
Of battles, or the last new bonnets.
By candle-light, at twelve o'clock,
To me it mattered not a tittle;
If those bright lips had quoted Locke,
I might have thought they murmured Little.

Through sunny May, through sultry June,
I loved her with a love eternal;
I spoke her praises to the moon,
I wrote them to the Sunday Journal.
My mother laughed; I soon found out
That ancient ladies have no feeling.
My father frowned; but how should gout
See any happiness in kneeling?

She was the daughter of a dean,
Rich, fat, and rather apoplectic;
She had one brother just thirteen,
Whose color was extremely hectic;
Her grandmother, for many a year,
Had fed the parish with her bounty;
Her second cousin was a peer,
And lord-lieutenant of the county.

But titles and the three per cents,[2]
And mortgages, and great relations,
And India bonds, and tithes and rents,
Oh! what are they to love's sensations?
Black eyes, fair forehead, clustering locks,
Such wealth, such honors, Cupid chooses;
He cares as little for the stocks
As Baron Rothschild for the Muses.

She sketched; the vale, the wood, the beach,
Grew lovelier from her pencil's shading;
She botanized; I envied each
Young blossom in her boudoir fading;
She warbled Handel,—it was grand,—
She made the Catalina[3] jealous;
She touched the organ,—I could stand
For hours and hours to blow the bellows.

She kept an album, too, at home,
Well filled with all an album's glories;
Paintings of butterflies and Rome,
Patterns for trimmings, Persian stories;
Soft songs to Julia's cockatoo.
Fierce odes to famine and to slaughter,
And autographs of Prince Leboo,
And recipes of elder water.

And she was flattered, worshipped, bored,
Her steps were watched, her dress was noted,
Her poodle dog was quite adored,
Her sayings were extremely quoted.
She laughed, and every heart was glad
As if the taxes were abolished;
She frowned, and every look was sad
As if the opera were demolished.

She smiled on many just for fun—
I knew that there was nothing in it;
I was the first, the only one
Her heart had thought of for a minute,
I knew it, for she told me so,
In phrase which was divinely moulded;
She wrote a charming hand, and oh!
How sweetly all her notes were folded!

Our love was like most other loves—
A little glow, a little shiver,
A rosebud and a pair of gloves,
And "Fly Not Yet" upon the river;
Some jealousy of some one's heir,
Some hopes of dying broken-hearted,
A miniature, a lock of hair,
The usual vows—and then we parted.

We parted—months and years rolled by;
We met again four summers after;
Our parting was all sob and sigh,
Our meeting was all mirth and laughter.
For in my heart's most secret cell
There had been many other lodgers,
And she was not the ball-room's belle,
But only—Mrs. Something Rogers!

(1830)

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danglers. Flirts.

[2] *three per cents.* Government bonds.

[3] *Catalina.* A prima donna of the period.

BONNY DUNDEE

SIR WALTER SCOTT

[John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, supported James II of England when the Scotch Parliament had taken the part of William of Orange. In 1689 he defied the Parliament, marched out of Edinburgh with his followers, and began the long "Jacobite" rebellion.]

To the Lords of Convention 'twas Claver'se who spoke,
"Ere the King's crown shall fall there are crowns to be broke;
So let each Cavalier who loves honour and me,
Come follow the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
  Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can,
  Come saddle your horses and call up your men;
  Come open the West Port[1] and let me gang free,
  And it's room for the bonnets of Bonny Dundee!"

Dundee he is mounted, he rides up the street,
The bells are rung backward,[2] the drums they are beat;
But the Provost,[3] douce[4] man, said, "Just e'en let him be,
The Gude Town is weel quit of that Deil of Dundee."
  Come fill up my cup, etc.

As he rode down the sanctified bends of the Bow,[5]
Ilk carline was flyting and shaking her pow;[6]
But the young plants of grace they looked couthie and slee,[7]
Thinking, luck to thy bonnet, thou Bonny Dundee!
  Come fill up my cup, etc.

With sour-featured Whigs the Grassmarket[8] was crammed
As if half the West had set tryst to be hanged;
There was spite in each look, there was fear in each e'e,
As they watched for the bonnets of Bonny Dundee.
  Come fill up my cup, etc.

These cowls of Kilmarnock[9] had spits and had spears,
And lang-hafted gullies[10] to kill Cavaliers;
But they shrunk to close-heads[11] and the causeway was free,
At the toss of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
  Come fill up my cup, etc.

He spurred to the foot of the proud Castle rock,
And with the gay Gordon he gallantly spoke;
"Let Mons Meg[12] and her marrows[13] speak twa words or three,
For the love of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee."
  Come fill up my cup, etc.

The Gordon demands of him which way he goes—
"Where'er shall direct me the shade of Montrose![14]
Your Grace in short space shall hear tidings of me,
Or that low lies the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
  Come fill up my cup, etc.

"There are hills beyond Pentland and lands beyond Forth,
If there's lords in the Lowlands, there's chiefs in the North;
There are wild Duniewassals[15] three thousand times three,
Will cry *hoigh!* for the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
  Come fill up my cup, etc.

"There's brass on the target of barkened[16] bull-hide;
There's steel in the scabbard that dangles beside;

---

[1] *Port.* Gate.
[2] *rung backward.* With the chimes reversed, a custom in giving alarms.
[3] *Provost.* Mayor.
[4] *douce.* Prudent.
[5] *bends of the Bow.* Windings of Bow Street.
[6] Every old woman was scolding and shaking her head.
[7] *couthie and slee.* Gracious and sly.
[8] *Grassmarket.* The place of execution.
[9] *cowls of Kilmarnock.* Men in Kilmarnock cowls,—Presbyterians.
[10] *gullies.* Knives.
[11] *close-heads.* Blind alleys.
[12] *Mons Meg.* A cannon.
[13] *marrows.* Mates.
[14] Montrose had supported Charles I, and been executed by the Covenanters in 1650.
[15] *Duniewassals.* Gentlemen of low degree.
[16] *barkened.* Bark-tanned.

The brass shall be burnished, the steel shall flash free,
At a toss of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, etc.

"Away to the hills, to the caves, to the rocks—
Ere I own an usurper, I'll couch with the fox;
And tremble, false Whigs, in the midst of your glee,
You have not seen the last of my bonnet and me!"
Come fill up my cup, etc.

He waved his proud hand and the trumpets were blown,
The kettle-drums clashed and the horsemen rode on,
Till on Ravelston's cliffs and on Clermiston's lea
Died away the wild war-notes of Bonny Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can,
Come saddle the horses and call up the men,
Come open your gates and let me gae free,
For it's up with the bonnets of Bonny Dundee!

(1830)

THE SILENT TOWER OF BOTTREAU

ROBERT STEPHEN HAWKER

[Tintadgel (more commonly written Tintagel) is on the coast of Cornwall. Here Hawker found a church-tower without bells. "On enquiry I was told that the bells were once shipped for this church, but that when the vessel was within sight of the tower the blasphemy of her captain was punished in the manner related in the poem."]

Tintadgel bells ring o'er the tide,
The boy leans on his vessel side;
He hears that sound, and dreams of home
Soothe the wild orphan of the foam.
"Come to thy God in time!"
Thus saith their pealing chime:
Youth, manhood, old age past,
"Come to thy God at last."

But why are Bottreau's echoes still?
Her tower stands proudly on the hill;
Yet the strange chough that home hath found,
The lamb lies sleeping on the ground.
"Come to thy God in time!"
Should be her answering chime:
"Come to thy God at last!"
Should echo on the blast.

The ship rode down with courses free,
The daughter of a distant sea:
Her sheet was loose, her anchor stored,
The merry Bottreau bells on board.
"Come to thy God in time!"
Rung out Tintadgel chime;
Youth, manhood, old age past,
"Come to thy God at last!"

The pilot heard his native bells
Hang on the breeze in fitful swells;
"Thank God," with reverent brow he cried,
"We make the shore with evening's tide."
"Come to thy God in time!"
It was his marriage chime:
Youth, manhood, old age past,
His bell must ring at last.

"Thank God, thou whining knave, on land,
But thank, at sea, the steersman's hand,"
The captain's voice above the gale:
"Thank the good ship and ready sail."
"Come to thy God in time!"
Sad grew the boding chime:
"Come to thy God at last!"
Boomed heavy on the blast.

Uprose that sea! as if it heard
The mighty Master's signal-word:
What thrills the captain's whitening lip?
The death-groans of his sinking ship.
"Come to thy God in time!"
Swung deep the funeral chime:
Grace, mercy, kindness past,
"Come to thy God at last!"

Long did the rescued pilot tell—
When gray hairs o'er his forehead fell,
While those around would hear and weep—
That fearful judgment of the deep.
"Come to thy God in time!"
He read his native chime:
Youth, manhood, old age past,
His bell rung out at last.

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Still when the storm of Bottreau's waves
Is wakening in his weedy caves,
Those bells, that sullen surges hide,
Peal their deep notes beneath the tide:
"Come to thy God in time!"
Thus saith the ocean chime:
Storm, billow, whirlwind past,
"Come to thy God at last!"

(1831)

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

ALFRED TENNYSON

[This poem is a kind of symbolic version of the story of Lancelot and Elaine (see page 160). In both versions Sir Lancelot is represented as unconsciously awakening the maiden out of the dream-life of her younger days, her love for him proving a curse because unrequited. With reference to the closing lines of Part II, Tennyson said: "The new-born love for something, for someone in the wide world from which she has been so long secluded, takes her out of the region of shadows into that of realities."]

PART I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold[1] and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot;
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot;
And by moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay[2]
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot;
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,[3]
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot;
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed:
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,

---

[1] *wold.* Down (tract of rolling land).

[2] *stay.* Stop.

[3] *pad.* Road-horse.

The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.[1]
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot;
And from his blazon'd baldric[2] slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot;
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded[3] meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot;
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly
And her eyes were darken'd wholly
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer,
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

(1832)

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[1] *golden Galaxy.* Milky Way.
[2] *baldric.* Belt.
[3] *bearded.* Having a tail or trail.

THE LAST BUCCANEER

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

The winds were yelling, the waves were swelling,
The sky was black and drear,
When the crew with eyes of flame brought the ship without a name
Alongside the last Buccaneer.[1]

"Whence flies your sloop full sail before so fierce a gale,
When all others drive bare on the seas?
Say, come ye from the shore of the holy Salvador,[2]
Or the Gulf of the rich Caribbees?"[3]

"From a shore no search hath found, from a gulf no line can sound,
Without rudder or needle we steer;
Above, below our bark, dies the sea-fowl and the shark,
As we fly by the last Buccaneer.

"To-night there shall be heard on the rocks of Cape de Verde,
A loud crash, and a louder roar;
And to-morrow shall the deep, with a heavy moaning, sweep
The corpses and wreck to the shore."

The stately ship of Clyde[4] securely now may ride,
In the breath of the citron shades;
And Severn's[4] towering mast securely now flies fast,
Through the sea of the balmy Trades.

From St. Jago's worthy port, from Havana's royal fort,
The seaman goes forth without fear;
For since that stormy night not a mortal hath had sight
Of the flag of the last Buccaneer.

(1839)

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[1] *Buccaneer.* One of the pirate ships engaged in preying on American commerce in the seventeenth century.
[2] *the holy Salvador.* San Salvador.
[3] The Caribbean Sea.
[4] *Clyde . . . Severn.* Rivers famous for their shipyards.

THE JACKDAW OF RHEIMS

RICHARD HARRIS BARHAM

The Jackdaw sat on the Cardinal's chair!
Bishop and abbot and prior were there;
Many a monk, and many a friar,
Many a knight, and many a squire,
With a great many more of lesser degree—
In sooth a goodly company;
And they served the Lord Primate on bended knee.
Never, I ween, was a prouder seen,
Read of in books, or dreamt of in dreams,
Than the Cardinal Lord Archbishop of Rheims!

In and out, through the motley rout,
That little Jackdaw kept hopping about;
Here and there, like a dog in a fair,
Over comfits[1] and cates,[2] and dishes and plates,
Cowl and cope, and rochet[3] and pall,
Mitre and crosier—he hopped upon all!
With saucy air he perched on the chair
Where in state the great Lord Cardinal sat
In the great Lord Cardinal's great red hat;
And he peered in the face of his Lordship's Grace,
With a satisfied look, as if he would say,
"We two are the greatest folks here to-day!"
And the priests, with awe, as such freaks they saw,
Said "The devil must be that little Jackdaw!"

The feast was over, the board was cleared,
The flawns[4] and the custards had all disappeared,
And six little singing-boys,—dear little souls!
In nice clean faces, and nice white stoles,
Came in order due, two by two,
Marching that grand refectory through!
A nice little boy held a golden ewer,
Embossed, and filled with water as pure
As any that flows between Rheims and Namur,
Which a nice little boy stood ready to catch
In a fine golden hand-basin made to match.

---

[1] *comfits.* Preserves. [2] *cates.* Delicacies.
[3] *rochet.* A bishop's vestment.
[4] *flawn.* A kind of custard pie.

Two nice little boys, rather more grown,
Carried lavender water and *eau de Cologne;*
And a nice little boy had a nice cake of soap,
Worthy of washing the hands of the Pope.
One little boy more a napkin bore,
Of the best white diaper, fringed with pink,
And a cardinal's hat marked in permanent ink.

The great Lord Cardinal turns at the sight
Of these nice little boys dressed all in white:
From his finger he draws his costly turquoise,
And, not thinking at all about little jackdaws,
Deposits it straight by the side of his plate,
While the nice little boys on his Eminence wait;
Till, when nobody's dreaming of any such thing,
That little Jackdaw hops off with the ring!

There's a cry and a shout, and a deuce of a rout,
And nobody seems to know what they're about,
But the monks have their pockets all turned inside out;
The friars are kneeling, and hunting, and feeling
The carpet, the floor, and the walls, and the ceiling.
The Cardinal drew off each plum-colored shoe,
And left his red stockings exposed to the view;
He peeps, and he feels in the toes and the heels;
They turn up the dishes—they turn up the plates—
They take up the poker and poke out the grates—
They turn up the rugs—they examine the mugs,—
But no!—no such thing,—they can't find THE RING!
And the Abbot declared that, "when nobody twigged[1] it,
Some rascal or other had popped in and prigged[2] it!"

The Cardinal rose with a dignified look,
He called for his candle, his bell, and his book!
In holy anger, and pious grief,
He solemnly cursed that rascally thief!
He cursed him at board, he cursed him in bed;
From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head;
He cursed him in sleeping, that every night
He should dream of the devil, and wake in a fright;
He cursed him in eating, he cursed him in drinking,
He cursed him in coughing, in sneezing, in winking;
He cursed him in sitting, in standing, in lying;
He cursed him in walking, in riding, in flying,
He cursed him living, he cursed him dying!
Never was heard such a terrible curse;
But, what gave rise to no little surprise,
Nobody seemed one penny the worse!

The day was gone, the night came on,
The monks and the friars they searched till dawn,
When the sacristan saw, on crumpled claw,
Come limping a poor little lame Jackdaw.
No longer gay as on yesterday,
His feathers all seemed to be turned the wrong way,—
His pinions drooped—he could hardly stand—
His head was as bald as the palm of your hand;
His eye so dim, so wasted each limb,
That, heedless of grammar, they all cried "That's HIM!
That's the scamp that has done this scandalous thing!
That's the thief that has got my Lord Cardinal's ring!"
The poor little Jackdaw, when the monks he saw,
Feebly gave vent to the ghost of a caw,
And turned his bald head, as much as to say,
"Pray be so good as to walk this way!"
Slower and slower he limped on before,
Till they came to the back of the belfry door,

---

[1] *twigged.* Noticed.
[2] *prigged.* Stolen.

Where the first thing they saw, midst the sticks and the straw,
Was the RING in the nest of that little Jackdaw!

Then the great Lord Cardinal called for his book,
And off that terrible curse he took;
The mute expression served in lieu of confession,
And, being thus coupled with full restitution,
The Jackdaw got plenary absolution!
When those words were heard, that poor little bird
Was so changed in a moment, 'twas really absurd:
He grew sleek and fat,—in addition to that,
A fresh crop of feathers came thick as a mat!
His tail waggled more even than before;
But no longer it wagged with an impudent air,
No longer he perched on the Cardinal's chair.
He now hopped about with a gait devout;
At matins, at vespers, he never was out;
And, so far from any more pilfering deeds,
He always seemed telling the Confessor's beads.
If any one lied, or if any one swore,
Or slumbered in prayer-time and happened to snore,
That good Jackdaw would give a great "Caw!"
As much as to say, "Don't do so any more!"
While many remarked, as his manners they saw,
That they never had known such a pious Jackdaw.
He long lived the pride of that countryside,
And at last in the odor of sanctity died;
When, as words were too faint his merits to paint,
The Conclave determined to make him a saint;
And on newly made saints and Popes, as you know,
It's the custom at Rome new names to bestow,—
So they canonized him by the name of Jim Crow!

(1840)

THE SKELETON IN ARMOR

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

[This poem was suggested to Longfellow by the discovery of an ancient skeleton in armor, unearthed at Fall River, Massachusetts, in 1839, in connection with the "Round Tower" at Newport (see line 134), which was supposed to be a relic of early Norse settlements in America.]

"Speak! speak! thou fearful guest!
Who, with thy hollow breast
Still in rude armor dressed,
Comest to daunt me!
Wrapped not in eastern balms,
But with thy fleshless palms
Stretched, as if asking alms,
Why dost thou haunt me?"

Then from those cavernous eyes
Pale flashes seemed to rise,
As when the northern skies
Gleam in December;[1]
And, like the water's flow
Under December's snow,
Came a dull voice of woe
From the heart's chamber.

"I was a Viking old!
My deeds, though manifold,
No Skald[2] in song has told,
No saga taught thee!
Take heed that in thy verse
Thou dost the tale rehearse,
Else dread a dead man's curse;
For this I sought thee.

"Far in the Northern Land,
By the wild Baltic's strand,
I, with my childish hand,
Tamed the gerfalcon;[3]
And, with my skates fast found,
Skimmed the half-frozen Sound,
That the poor whimpering hound
Trembled to walk on.

"Oft to his frozen lair
Tracked I the grisly bear,
While from my path the hare
Fled like a shadow;
Oft through the forest dark
Followed the were-wolf's[4] bark,
Until the soaring lark
Sang from the meadow.

[1] The aurora borealis.
[2] *Skald*. Poet.
[3] *gerfalcon*. Large Arctic falcon.
[4] *were-wolf*. A wolf incorporating the soul of a man.

"But when I older grew,
Joining a corsair's crew,
O'er the dark sea I flew
With the marauders.
Wild was the life we led;
Many the souls that sped,
Many the hearts that bled,
By our stern orders.

"Many a wassail-bout[1]
Wore the long winter out;
Often our midnight shout
Set the cocks crowing,
As we the Berserk's[2] tale[3]
Measured in cups of ale,
Draining the oaken pail
Filled to o'erflowing.

"Once as I told in glee
Tales of the stormy sea,
Soft eyes did gaze on me,
Burning yet tender;
And as the white stars shine
On the dark Norway pine,
On that dark heart of mine
Fell their soft splendor.

"I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
Yielding, yet half afraid,
And in the forest's shade
Our vows were plighted.
Under its loosened vest
Fluttered her little breast,
Like birds within their nest
By the hawk frighted.

"Bright in her father's hall
Shields gleamed upon the wall,
Loud sang the minstrels all,
Chanting his glory;
When of old Hildebrand
I asked his daughter's hand,
Mute did the minstrels stand
To hear my story.

"While the brown ale he quaffed,
Loud then the champion laughed,
And as the wind-gusts waft
The sea-foam brightly,
So the loud laugh of scorn,
Out of those lips unshorn,
From the deep drinking-horn
Blew the foam lightly.

"She was a prince's child,
I but a Viking wild,
And though she blushed and smiled,
I was discarded!
Should not the dove so white
Follow the sea-mew's flight?
Why did they leave that night
Her nest unguarded?

"Scarce had I put to sea,
Bearing the maid with me,—
Fairest of all was she
Among the Norsemen!—
When on the white sea-strand,
Waving his armed hand,
Saw we old Hildebrand,
With twenty horsemen.

"Then launched they to the blast,
Bent like a reed each mast,
Yet we were gaining fast,
When the wind failed us;
And with a sudden flaw
Came round the gusty Skaw,[4]
So that our foe we saw
Laugh as he hailed us.

"And as to catch the gale
Round veered the flapping sail,
'Death!' was the helmsman's hail,
'Death without quarter!'
Midships with iron keel
Struck we her ribs of steel;
Down her black hulk did reel
Through the black water!

"As with his wings aslant,
Sails the fierce cormorant,
Seeking some rocky haunt,
With his prey laden,
So toward the open main,
Beating to sea again,
Through the wild hurricane,
Bore I the maiden.

"Three weeks we westward bore,
And when the storm was o'er,
Cloud-like we saw the shore
Stretching to leeward;
There for my lady's bower
Built I the lofty tower,
Which, to this very hour,
Stands looking seaward.

"There lived we many years;
Time dried the maiden's tears;
She had forgot her fears,
She was a mother.

---

[1] *wassail-bout.* Drinking feast.
[2] *Berserk.* Wild warrior.
[3] *tale.* Portion.
[4] *Skaw.* A Jutland cape.

Death closed her mild blue eyes;
Under that tower she lies;
Ne'er shall the sun arise
On such another.

"Still grew my bosom then,
Still as a stagnant fen!
Hateful to me were men,
The sunlight hateful!
In the vast forest here,
Clad in my warlike gear,
Fell I upon my spear;
Oh, death was grateful!

"Thus, seamed with many scars,
Bursting these prison bars,
Up to its native stars
My soul ascended!
There from the flowing bowl
Deep drinks the warrior's soul,
Skoal![1] to the Northland! *skoal!*"
Thus the tale ended.

(1841)

HORATIUS

A LAY MADE ABOUT THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCLX

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

[Macaulay supposes this poem to be a popular ballad among the Romans, written about 390 B.C., but dealing with events of about 510 B.C. At that period Rome was a city ruling but a few square miles of territory, and the Etruscan dominions of Lars Porsena were of much greater extent. The Tarquin kings had been expelled from Rome after Sextus, the son of Tarquinius Superbus, had insulted and assaulted the matron Lucretia; Lars Porsena then gathered an army with the intention of forcing the Tarquins upon the city again.]

Lars Porsena of Clusium
By the Nine Gods he swore
That the great house of Tarquin
Should suffer wrong no more.
By the Nine Gods he swore it,
And named a trysting day,
And bade his messengers ride forth,
East and west and south and north,
To summon his array.

East and west and south and north
The messengers ride fast,
And tower and town and cottage
Have heard the trumpet's blast.
Shame on the false Etruscan
Who lingers in his home,
When Porsena of Clusium
Is on the march for Rome.

The horsemen and the footmen
Are pouring in amain
From many a stately market-place,
From many a fruitful plain;
From many a lonely hamlet,
Which, hid by beech and pine,
Like an eagle's nest, hangs on the crest
Of purple Apennine;

From lordly Volaterræ,
Where scowls the far-famed hold
Piled by the hands of giants
For godlike kings of old;
From seagirt Populonia,
Whose sentinels descry
Sardinia's snowy mountain-tops
Fringing the southern sky;

From the proud mart of Pisæ,
Queen of the western waves,
Where ride Massilia's triremes
Heavy with fair-haired slaves;
From where sweet Clanis wanders
Through corn and vines and flowers;
From where Cortona lifts to heaven
Her diadem of towers.

Tall are the oaks whose acorns
Drop in Dark Auser's rill;
Fat are the stags that champ the boughs
Of the Ciminian hill;
Beyond all streams Clitumnus
Is to the herdsman dear;
Best of all pools the fowler loves
The great Volsinian mere.

But now no stroke of woodman
Is heard by Auser's rill;
No hunter tracks the stag's green path
Up the Ciminian hill;
Unwatched along Clitumnus
Grazes the milk-white steer;
Unharmed the water-fowl may dip
In the Volsinian mere.

The harvests of Arretium
This year old men shall reap;
This year, young boys in Umbro
Shall plunge the struggling sheep;
And in the vats of Luna
This year the must shall foam
Round the white feet of laughing girls
Whose sires have marched to Rome.

---

[1] *Skoal!* Hail! (The Icelandic salutation when a health is pledged.)

There be thirty chosen prophets,
The wisest of the land,
Who alway by Lars Porsena
Both morn and evening stand;
Evening and morn the Thirty
Have turned the verses o'er,
Traced from the right on linen white
By mighty seers of yore.

And with one voice the Thirty
Have their glad answer given:
"Go forth, go forth, Lars Porsena;
Go forth, beloved of Heaven;
Go, and return in glory
To Clusium's royal dome,
And hang round Nurscia's [1] altars
The golden shields of Rome."

And now hath every city
Sent up her tale of men;
The foot are fourscore thousand,
The horse are thousands ten.
Before the gates of Sutrium [2]
Is met the great array.
A proud man was Lars Porsena
Upon the trysting day.

For all the Etruscan armies
Were ranged beneath his eye,
And many a banished Roman,
And many a stout ally;
And with a mighty following
To join the muster came
The Tusculan Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name.

But by the yellow Tiber
Was tumult and affright:
From all the spacious champaign
To Rome men took their flight.
A mile around the city
The throng stopped up the ways;
A fearful sight it was to see
Through two long nights and days.

For aged folks on crutches,
And women great with child,
And mothers sobbing over babes
That clung to them and smiled,
And sick men borne in litters
High on the necks of slaves,
And troops of sunburned husbandmen
With reaping-hooks and staves,
And droves of mules and asses
Laden with skins of wine,
And endless flocks of goats and sheep,
And endless herds of kine,
And endless trains of wagons
That creaked beneath the weight
Of corn-sacks and of household goods,
Choked every roaring gate.

Now from the rock Tarpeian
Could the wan burghers spy
The line of blazing villages
Red in the midnight sky.
The Fathers of the City,
They sat all night and day,
For every hour some horseman came
With tidings of dismay.

To eastward and to westward
Have spread the Tuscan bands;
Nor house nor fence nor dovecote
In Crustumerium stands.
Verbenna down to Ostia
Hath wasted all the plain;
Astur hath stormed Janiculum,
And the stout guards are slain.

I wis,[3] in all the Senate,
There was no heart so bold,
But sore it ached, and fast it beat,
When that ill news was told.
Forthwith up rose the Consul,
Up rose the Fathers all;
In haste they girded up their gowns,
And hied them to the wall.

They held a council standing
Before the River Gate;
Short time was there, ye well may guess,
For musing or debate.
Out spake the Consul roundly:
"The bridge must straight go down;
For, since Janiculum is lost,
Nought else can save the town."

Just then a scout came flying,
All wild with haste and fear:
"To arms! to arms! Sir Consul;
Lars Porsena is here."
On the low hills to westward
The Consul fixed his eye,
And saw the swarthy storm of dust
Rise fast along the sky.

[1] *Nurscia.* The goddess of fortune.
[2] *Sutrium.* Forty miles from Rome, commanding the road into Etruria.
[3] *I wis.* Properly one word, meaning *surely*, but often understood to mean "I know."

And nearer fast, and nearer,
Doth the red whirlwind come;
And louder still, and still more loud,
From underneath that rolling cloud,
Is heard the trumpet's war-note proud,
The trampling, and the hum.
And plainly and more plainly
Now through the gloom appears,
Far to left and far to right,
In broken gleams of dark-blue light,
The long array of helmets bright,
The long array of spears.

And plainly and more plainly,
Above that glimmering line,
Now might ye see the banners
Of twelve fair cities shine;
But the banner of proud Clusium
Was highest of them all,
The terror of the Umbrian,
The terror of the Gaul.

And plainly and more plainly
Now might the burghers know,
By port and vest, by horse and crest,
Each warlike Lucumo.[1]
There Cilnius of Arretium
On his fleet roan was seen;
And Astur of the fourfold shield,
Girt with the brand[2] none else may wield,
Tolumnius with the belt of gold,
And dark Verbenna from the hold
By reedy Thrasymene.

Fast by the royal standard,
O'erlooking all the war,
Lars Porsena of Clusium
Sat in his ivory car.
By the right wheel rode Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name;
And by the left false Sextus,
That wrought the deed of shame.

But when the face of Sextus
Was seen among the foes,
A yell that rent the firmament
From all the town arose.
On the house-tops was no woman
But spat towards him and hissed,
No child but screamed out curses
And shook its little fist.

But the Consul's brow was sad,
And the Consul's speech was low,
And darkly looked he at the wall,
And darkly at the foe.

"Their van will be upon us
Before the bridge goes down;
And if they once may win the bridge,
What hope to save the town?"

Then out spake brave Horatius,
The Captain of the Gate:
"To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late.
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers
And the temples of his Gods,

"And for the tender mother
Who dandled him to rest,
And for the wife who nurses
His baby at her breast,
And for the holy maidens
Who feed the eternal flame,
To save them from false Sextus
That wrought the deed of shame?

"Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,
With all the speed ye may;
I, with two more to help me,
Will hold the foe in play.
In yon strait[3] path a thousand
May well be stopped by three.
Now who will stand on either hand,
And keep the bridge with me?"

Then out spake Spurius Lartius;
A Ramnian proud was he:
"Lo, I will stand at thy right hand,
And keep the bridge with thee."
And out spake strong Herminius;
Of Titian blood was he:
"I will abide on thy left side,
And keep the bridge with thee."

"Horatius," quoth the Consul,
"As thou sayest, so let it be."
And straight against that great array
Forth went the dauntless Three.
For Romans in Rome's quarrel
Spared neither land nor gold,
Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
In the brave days of old.

Then none was for party;
Then all were for the state;
Then the great man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great:
Then lands were fairly portioned;
Then spoils were fairly sold;
The Romans were like brothers
In the brave days of old.

---

[1] *Lucumo.* Etruscan chief.
[2] *brand.* Sword.
[3] *strait.* Narrow

Now Roman is to Roman
More hateful than a foe;
And the Tribunes beard the high,
And the Fathers grind the low.
As we wax hot in faction,
In battle we wax cold:
Wherefore men fight not as they fought
In the brave days of old.

Now while the Three were tightening
Their harness on their backs,
The Consul was the foremost man
To take in hand an axe;
And Fathers mixed with Commons
Seized hatchet, bar, and crow,
And smote upon the planks above,
And loosed the props below.

Meanwhile the Tuscan army,
Right glorious to behold,
Came flashing back the noonday light,
Rank behind rank, like surges bright
Of a broad sea of gold.
Four hundred trumpets sounded
A peal of warlike glee,
As that great host, with measured tread,
And spears advanced, and ensigns spread,
Rolled slowly towards the bridge's head,
Where stood the dauntless Three.

The Three stood calm and silent,
And looked upon the foes,
And a great shout of laughter
From all the vanguard rose;
And forth three chiefs came spurring
Before that deep array;
To earth they sprang, their swords they drew,
And lifted high their shields, and flew
To win the narrow way:

Aunus from green Tifernum,
Lord of the Hill of Vines;
And Seius, whose eight hundred slaves
Sicken in Ilva's mines;
And Picus, long to Clusium
Vassal in peace and war,
Who led to fight his Umbrian powers
From that grey crag where, girt with towers,
The fortress of Nequinum lowers
O'er the pale waves of Nar.

Stout Lartius hurled down Aunus
Into the stream beneath;
Herminius struck at Seius,
And clove him to the teeth;
At Picus brave Horatius
Darted one fiery thrust,
And the proud Umbrian's gilded arms
Clashed in the bloody dust.

Then Ocnus of Falerii
Rushed on the Roman Three;
And Lausulus of Urgo,
The rover of the sea;
And Aruns of Volsinium,
Who slew the great wild boar,
The great wild boar that had his den
Amidst the reeds of Cosa's fen,
And wasted fields and slaughtered men
Along Albinia's shore.

Herminius smote down Aruns;
Lartius laid Ocnus low;
Right to the heart of Lausulus
Horatius sent a blow.
"Lie there," he cried, "fell pirate!
No more, aghast and pale,
From Ostia's walls the crowd shall mark
The track of thy destroying bark.
No more Campania's hinds shall fly
To woods and caverns when they spy
Thy thrice accursèd sail."

But now no sound of laughter
Was heard among the foes.
A wild and wrathful clamor
From all the vanguard rose.
Six spears' length from the entrance
Halted that deep array,
And for a space no man came forth
To win the narrow way.

But hark! the cry is Astur;
And lo! the ranks divide;
And the great Lord of Luna
Comes with his stately stride.
Upon his ample shoulders
Clangs loud the fourfold shield,
And in his hand he shakes the brand
Which none but he can wield.

He smiled on those bold Romans
A smile serene and high;
He eyed the flinching Tuscans,
And scorn was in his eye.
Quoth he, "The she-wolf's litter[1]
Stand savagely at bay;
But will ye dare to follow,
If Astur clears the way?"

---

[1] Alluding to the legend of the nursing of Romulus and Remus by a wolf.

Then, whirling up his broadsword
With both hands to the height,
He rushed against Horatius,
And smote with all his might.
With shield and blade Horatius
Right deftly turned the blow.
The blow, though turned, came yet too nigh;
It missed his helm, but gashed his thigh:
The Tuscans raised a joyful cry
To see the red blood flow.

He reeled, and on Herminius
He leaned one breathing-space;
Then, like a wild-cat mad with wounds,
Sprang right at Astur's face.
Through teeth, and skull, and helmet
So fierce a thrust he sped,
The good sword stood a hand-breadth out
Behind the Tuscan's head.

And the great Lord of Luna
Fell at that deadly stroke,
As falls on Mount Alvernus
A thunder-smitten oak;
Far o'er the crashing forest
The giant arms lie spread,
And the pale augurs,[1] muttering low,
Gaze on the blasted head.

On Astur's throat Horatius
Right firmly pressed his heel,
And thrice and four times tugged amain
Ere he wrenched out the steel.
"And see," he cried, "the welcome,
Fair guests, that waits you here!
What noble Lucumo comes next
To taste our Roman cheer?"

But at his haughty challenge
A sullen murmur ran,
Mingled of wrath and shame and dread,
Along that glittering van.
There lacked not men of prowess,
Nor men of lordly race;
For all Etruria's noblest
Were round that fatal place.

But all Etruria's noblest
Felt their hearts sink to see
On the earth the bloody corpses,
In the path the dauntless Three;
And, from the ghastly entrance
Where those bold Romans stood,
All shrank, like boys who, unaware,
Ranging the woods to start a hare,
Come to the mouth of the dark lair
Where, growling low, a fierce old bear
Lies amidst bones and blood.

Was none who would be foremost
To lead such dire attack;
But those behind cried "Forward!"
And those before cried "Back!"
And backward now and forward
Wavers the deep array;
And on the tossing sea of steel
To and fro the standards reel;
And the victorious trumpet-peal
Dies fitfully away.

Yet one man for one moment
Strode out before the crowd;
Well known was he to all the Three,
And they gave him greeting loud,
"Now welcome, welcome, Sextus!
Now welcome to thy home!
Why dost thou stay and turn away?
Here lies the road to Rome."

Thrice looked he at the city;
Thrice looked he at the dead;
And thrice came on in fury,
And thrice turned back in dread;
And, white with fear and hatred,
Scowled at the narrow way
Where, wallowing in a pool of blood,
The bravest Tuscans lay.

But meanwhile axe and lever
Have manfully been plied;
And now the bridge hangs tottering
Above the boiling tide.
"Come back, come back, Horatius!"
Loud cried the Fathers all.
"Back, Lartius! back, Herminius!
Back, ere the ruins fall!"

Back darted Spurius Lartius;
Herminius darted back;
And, as they passed, beneath their feet
They felt the timbers crack.
But when they turned their faces,
And on the farther shore
Saw brave Horatius stand alone,
They would have crossed once more.

But with a crash like thunder
Fell every loosened beam,
And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
Lay right athwart the stream;

---

[1] *augurs.* Priestly interpreters of omens.

And a long shout of triumph
  Rose from the walls of Rome,
As to the highest turret-tops
  Was splashed the yellow foam.

And, like a horse unbroken
  When first he feels the rein,
The furious river struggled hard,
  And tossed his tawny mane,
And burst the curb and bounded,
  Rejoicing to be free,
And whirling down, in fierce career,
Battlement and plank and pier,
  Rushed headlong to the sea.

Alone stood brave Horatius,
  But constant still in mind;
Thrice thirty thousand foes before,
  And the broad flood behind.
"Down with him," cried false Sextus,
  With a smile on his pale face.
"Now yield thee," cried Lars Porsena,
  "Now yield thee to our grace."

Round turned he, as not deigning
  Those craven ranks to see;
Nought spake he to Lars Porsena,
  To Sextus nought spake he;
But he saw on Palatinus
  The white porch of his home;
And he spake to the noble river
  That rolls by the towers of Rome.

"Oh, Tiber! father Tiber!
  To whom the Romans pray,
A Roman's life, a Roman's arms,
  Take thou in charge this day!"
So he spake, and speaking, sheathèd
  The good sword by his side,
And with his harness on his back,
  Plunged headlong in the tide.

No sound of joy or sorrow
  Was heard from either bank;
But friends and foes in dumb surprise,
With parted lips and straining eyes,
  Stood gazing where he sank;
And when above the surges
  They saw his crest appear,
All Rome sent forth a rapturous cry,
And even the ranks of Tuscany
  Could scarce forbear to cheer.

But fiercely ran the current,
  Swollen high by months of rain;
And fast his blood was flowing,
  And he was sore in pain,
And heavy with his armour,
  And spent with changing blows;
And oft they thought him sinking,
  But still again he rose.

Never, I ween, did swimmer,
  In such an evil case,
Struggle through such a raging flood
  Safe to the landing-place;
But his limbs were borne up bravely
  By the brave heart within,
And our good father Tiber[1]
  Bore bravely up his chin.

"Curse on him!" quoth false Sextus;
  "Will not the villain drown?
But for this stay, ere close of day
  We should have sacked the town!"
"Heaven help him!" quoth Lars Porsena,
  "And bring him safe to shore:
For such a gallant feat of arms
  Was never seen before."

And now he feels the bottom;
  Now on dry earth he stands;
Now round him throng the Fathers
  To press his gory hands;
And now, with shouts and clapping,
  And noise of weeping loud,
He enters through the River Gate,
  Borne by the joyous crowd.

They gave him of the corn-land,
  That was of public right,
As much as two strong oxen
  Could plough from morn till night;
And they made a molten image,
  And set it up on high,
And there it stands unto this day
  To witness if I lie.

It stands in the Comitium,[2]
  Plain for all folk to see;
Horatius in his harness,
  Halting[3] upon one knee:
And underneath is written,
  In letters all of gold,
How valiantly he kept the bridge
  In the brave days of old.

And still his name sounds stirring
  Unto the men of Rome,
As the trumpet-blast that cries to them
  To charge the Volscian home;

---

[1] The god of the river.

[2] *Comitium.* A space fronting the senate-house in the Forum.

[3] Limping.

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And wives still pray to Juno
  For boys with hearts as bold
As his who kept the bridge so well
  In the brave days of old.

And in the nights of winter,
  When the cold north winds blow,
And the long howling of the wolves
  Is heard amidst the snow;
When round the lonely cottage
  Roars loud the tempest's din,
And the good logs of Algidus
  Roar louder yet within;

When the oldest cask is opened,
  And the largest lamp is lit;
When the chestnuts glow in the embers,
  And the kid turns on the spit;
When young and old in circle
  Around the firebrands close;
When the girls are weaving baskets,
  And the lads are shaping bows;

When the goodman mends his armour,
  And trims his helmet's plume;
When the goodwife's shuttle merrily
  Goes flashing through the loom;
With weeping and with laughter
  Still is the story told,
How well Horatius kept the bridge
  In the brave days of old.

(1842)

Familiar pentameter -

It is an intricate piece of work

MY LAST DUCHESS

FERRARA

ROBERT BROWNING

couplet rhyme

[The Duke of Ferrara is supposed to be speaking,—a typical character of the Italian Renaissance, when unscrupulous cruelty and artistic taste were not infrequently found in combination. This is a true "dramatic" monologue, in that some little action, as well as character portrayal, is implied in the speaker's words. The names of the painter and the sculptor, Frà Pandolf and Claus of Innsbruck, are fictitious.]

Pause may come anywhere

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed: she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set

fine poetry -

has humane element - yet a fairly complete characterization of Duchess, Duke and a

Her wits to yours, forsooth, and make excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

(1842)

THE SHEPHERD OF KING ADMETUS

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

[This poem deals with a Greek legend of Apollo, god of music and poetry, who was said to have been condemned by Jupiter to serve a mortal for one year; he became shepherd to Admetus, King of Thessaly.]

There came a youth upon the earth,
Some thousand years ago,
Whose slender hands were nothing worth,
Whether to plough, or reap, or sow.

Upon an empty tortoise-shell
He stretched some cords, and drew
Music that made men's bosoms swell
Fearless, or brimmed their eyes with dew.

Then King Admetus, one who had
Pure taste by right divine,
Decreed his singing not too bad
To hear between the cups of wine:

And so, well pleased with being soothed
Into a sweet half-sleep,
Three times his kingly beard he smoothed,
And made him viceroy o'er his sheep.

His words were simple words enough,
And yet he used them so
That what in other mouths was rough
In his seemed musical and low.

Men called him but a shiftless youth
In whom no good they saw;
And yet, unwittingly, in truth,
They made his careless words their law.

They knew not how he learned at all,
For idly, hour by hour,
He sat and watched the dead leaves fall,
Or mused upon a common flower.

It seemed the loveliness of things
Did teach him all their use,
For in mere weeds, and stones, and springs,
He found a healing power profuse.

Men granted that his speech was wise,
But when a glance they caught
Of his slim grace and woman's eyes,
They laughed, and called him good-for-naught.

Yet after he was dead and gone,
And e'en his memory dim,
Earth seemed more sweet to live upon,
More full of love, because of him.

And day by day more holy grew
Each spot where he had trod,
Till after-poets only knew
Their first-born brother as a god.

(1842)

RHŒCUS

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

God sends his teachers unto every age,
To every clime, and every race of men,
With revelations fitted to their growth
And shape of mind, nor gives the realm of Truth
Into the selfish rule of one sole race:
Therefore each form of worship that hath swayed
The life of man, and given it to grasp
The master-key of knowledge, reverence,

Enfolds some germs of goodness and of right;
Else never had the eager soul, which loathes
The slothful down of pampered ignorance,
Found in it even a moment's fitful rest....
Hear now this fairy legend of old Greece,
As full of freedom, youth, and beauty still
As the immortal freshness of that grace
Carved for all ages on some Attic frieze.
A youth named Rhœcus, wandering in the wood,
Saw an old oak just trembling to its fall;
And, feeling pity of so fair a tree,
He propped its gray trunk with admiring care,
And with a thoughtless footstep loitered on.
But as he turned he heard a voice behind
That murmured "Rhœcus!" 'Twas as if the leaves,
Stirred by a passing breath, had murmured it;
And while he paused, bewildered, yet again
It murmured "Rhœcus!" softer than a breeze.
He started, and beheld with dizzy eyes
What seemed the substance of a happy dream
Stand there before him, spreading a warm glow
Within the green glooms of the shadowy oak:
It seemed a woman's shape, yet all too fair
To be a woman, and with eyes too meek
For any that were wont to mate with gods;
All naked like a goddess stood she there,
And like a goddess all too beautiful
To feel the guilt-born earthliness of shame.
"Rhœcus, I am the Dryad of this tree;"
Thus she began, dropping her low-toned words
Serene and full and clear as drops of dew;
"And with it I am doomed to live and die:
The rain and sunshine are my caterers,
Nor have I other bliss than simple life.
Now ask me what thou wilt, that I can give,
And with a thankful joy it shall be thine."
Then Rhœcus, with a flutter at the heart,
Yet, by the prompting of such beauty, bold,
Answered: "What is there that can satisfy
The endless craving of the soul but love?
Give me thy love, or but the hope of that
Which must be evermore my spirit's goal."
After a little pause she said again,
But with a glimpse of sadness in her tone,
"I give it, Rhœcus, though a perilous gift:
An hour before the sunset meet me here."
And straightway there was nothing he could see
But the green glooms beneath the shadowy oak,
And not a sound came to his straining ears
But the low trickling rustle of the leaves
And, far away upon an emerald slope,
The falter of an idle shepherd's pipe.
Now in those days of simpleness and faith
Men did not think that happy things were dreams
Because they overstepped the narrow bourne
Of likelihood, but reverently deemed
Nothing too wondrous or too beautiful
To be the guerdon of a daring heart.
So Rhœcus made no doubt that he was blest;
And all along unto the city's gate
Earth seemed to spring beneath him as he walked,
The clear, broad sky looked bluer than its wont,
And he could scarce believe he had not wings,
Such sunshine seemed to glitter through his veins
Instead of blood, so light he felt and strange.
Young Rhœcus had a faithful heart enough,
But one that in the present dwelt too much,
And, taking with blithe welcome whatsoe'er
Chance gave of joy, was wholly bound in that;
Like the contented peasant of a vale,
Deemed it the world and never looked beyond.
So, haply meeting in the afternoon
Some comrades who were playing at the dice,
He joined them, and forgot all else beside.
The dice were rattling at the merriest,

And Rhœcus, who had met but sorry luck,
Just laughed in triumph at a happy throw,
When through the room there hummed a yellow bee
That buzzed about his ear with down-dropped legs
As if to light. And Rhœcus laughed and said,
Feeling how red and flushed he was with loss,
"By Venus! does he take me for a rose?"
And brushed him off with rough, impatient hand.
But still the bee came back, and thrice again
Rhœcus did beat him off with growing wrath.
Then through the window flew the wounded bee;
And Rhœcus, tracking him with angry eyes,
Saw a sharp mountain-peak of Thessaly
Against the red disc of the setting sun,—
And instantly the blood sank from his heart,
As if its very walls had caved away.
Without a word he turned, and, rushing forth,
Ran madly through the city and the gate,
And o'er the plain, which now the wood's long shade,
By the low sun thrown forward broad and dim,
Darkened well-nigh unto the city's wall.
  Quite spent and out of breath, he reached the tree,
And, listening fearfully, he heard once more
The low voice murmur "Rhœcus!" close at hand;
Whereat he looked around him, but could see
Nought but the deepening glooms beneath the oak.
Then sighed the voice, "Oh, Rhœcus, nevermore
Shalt thou behold me or by day or night!
Me, who would fain have blessed thee with a love
More ripe and bounteous than ever yet
Filled up with nectar any mortal heart:
But thou didst scorn my humble messenger,
And sent'st him back to me with bruisèd wings.
We spirits only show to gentle eyes;
We ever ask an undivided love;
And he who scorns the least of Nature's works
Is thenceforth exiled and shut out from all.
Farewell! for thou canst never see me more."
  Then Rhœcus beat his breast, and groaned aloud,
And cried, "Be pitiful! forgive me yet
This once, and I shall never need it more!"
"Alas!" the voice returned, "'tis thou art blind,
Not I unmerciful: I can forgive,
But have no skill to heal thy spirit's eyes;
Only the soul hath power o'er itself."
With that again there murmured "Nevermore!"
And Rhœcus after heard no other sound,
Except the rattling of the oak's crisp leaves,
Like the long surf upon a distant shore
Raking the sea-worn pebbles up and down.
The night had gathered round him: o'er the plain
The city sparkled with its thousand lights,
And sounds of revel fell upon his ear
Harshly and like a curse; above, the sky,
With all its bright sublimity of stars,
Deepened, and on his forehead smote the breeze.
Beauty was all around him, and delight;
But from that eve he was alone on earth.

(1843)

ABOU BEN ADHEM

LEIGH HUNT

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold:
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?" The vision raised its head,

And, with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still; and said, "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow-men."

The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again, with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed,—
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

(1844)

ballad meas.

omance. close

mediaeval

RIME OF THE DUCHESS MAY

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

[An imitation of an old ballad. In the original version Mrs. Browning inserts the refrain "Toll slowly" in the midst of each stanza, conceiving the verses to be repeated to the accompaniment of a funeral bell. The present version is much abbreviated, some thirty-six stanzas being omitted, including the first thirteen.]

strange meter
accentual syll[illegible]

'Twas ǎ Duke's fair orphan girl, and her uncle's ward, the Earl,
Who betrothed her, twelve years old, for the sake of dowry gold,
To his son, Lord Leigh, the churl.

But what time she had made good all her years of womanhood,
Unto both those lords of Leigh spake she out right sovranly,
"My will runneth as my blood.

"And while this same blood makes red this same right hand's veins," she said,
"'Tis my will as lady free not to wed a lord of Leigh,
But Sir Guy of Linteged."

The old Earl he smilèd smooth, then he sighed for wilful youth—
"Good my niece, that hand withal looketh somewhat soft and small
For so large a will, in sooth."

She, too, smiled by that same sign, but her smile was cold and fine,—
"Little hand clasps muckle gold, or it were not worth the hold
Of thy son, good uncle mine!"

Then the young lord jerked his breath, and sware thickly in his teeth,
He would wed his own betrothed, and[1] she loved him and she loathed,
Let the life come or the death.

Up she rose with scornful eyes, as her father's child might rise,—
"Thy hound's blood, my lord of Leigh, stains thy knightly heel," quoth she,
"And he moans not where he lies.

"But a woman's will dies hard, in the hall or on the sward!
By that grave, my lords, which made me orphaned girl and dowered lady,
I deny you wife and ward."

Unto each she bowed her head, and swept past with lofty tread.
Ere the midnight bell had ceased, in the chapel had the priest
Blessed her, bride of Linteged.

---

[1] *and . . . and.* Whether . . . or.

unaccented

Fast and fain the bridal train along the night-storm rode amain.
Hard the steeds of lord and serf struck their hoofs out on the turf,
In the pauses of the rain.

Fast and fain the kinsmen's train along the storm pursued amain,
Steed on steed-track, dashing off,—thickening, doubling, hoof on hoof,
In the pauses of the rain.

And the bridegroom led the flight on his red-roan steed of might,
And the bride lay on his arm, still, as if she feared no harm,
Smiling out into the night.

Up the mountain wheeled the steed,—girth to ground, and fetlocks spread,—
Headlong bounds, and rocking flanks,—down he staggered, to the banks,
To the towers of Linteged.

On the steed she dropt her cheek, kissed his mane and kissed his neck—
"I had happier die by thee, than live on a Lady Leigh,"
Were the first words she did speak.

But a three months' joyaunce lay 'twixt that moment and to-day,
When five hundred archers tall stand beside the castle wall,
To recapture Duchess May.

And the castle standeth black, with the red sun at its back,
And a fortnight's siege is done, and, except the Duchess, none
Can misdoubt the coming wrack.[1]

Then the captain, young Lord Leigh, with his eyes so grey of blee,[2]
And thin lips that scarcely sheath the cold white gnashing teeth,
Gnashed in smiling, absently,

Cried aloud, "So goes the day, bridegroom fair of Duchess May!
Look thy last upon the sun! if thou seest to-morrow's one,
'Twill be through a foot of clay.

"Peck on blindly, netted dove! If a wife's name thee behoove,
Thou shalt wear the same to-morrow, ere the grave has hid the sorrow
Of thy last ill-mated love.

"O'er his fixed and silent mouth thou and I will call back troth.
He shall altar be, and priest,—and he will not cry, at least,
'I forbid you—I am loth!'

"I will wring thy fingers pale in the gauntlet of my mail.
'Little hand and muckle gold' close shall lie within my hold,
As the sword did, to prevail."

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,
Oh, and laughed the Duchess May, and her soul did put away
All his boasting for a jest.

In her chamber did she sit, laughing low to think of it,—
"Tower is strong and will is free,—thou canst boast, my Lord of Leigh,
But thou boastest little wit."

---

[1] *wrack.* Destruction.

[2] *blee.* Hue.

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west;
On the tower the castle's lord leant in silence on his sword,
With an anguish in his breast.

With a spirit-laden weight did he lean down passionate;—
They have almost sapped[1] the wall,—they will enter therewithal,
With no knocking at the gate.

Then the sword he leant upon shivered, snapped upon the stone;—
"Sword," he thought, with inward laugh, "ill thou servest for a staff,
When thy nobler use is done!

"Sword, thy nobler use is done! Tower is lost, and shame begun!
If we met them in the breach, hilt to hilt or speech to speech,
We should die there, each for one.

"If we met them at the wall, we should singly, vainly fall.
But if I die here alone, then I die, who am but one,
And die nobly for them all.

"Five true friends lie, for my sake, in the moat and in the brake;[2]
Thirteen warriors lie at rest, with a black wound in the breast,
And not one of these will wake.

"So no more of this shall be! heart-blood weighs too heavily,
And I could not sleep in grave, with the faithful and the brave
Heaped around and over me.

"These shall never die for me,—life-blood falls too heavily;
And if I die here apart, o'er my dead and silent heart
They shall pass out safe and free.

"When the foe hath heard it said, 'Death holds Guy of Linteged,'
That new corse new peace shall bring, and a blessèd blessèd thing
Shall the stone be at its head.

"Then my friends shall pass out free, and shall bear my memory;
Then my foes shall sleek[3] their pride, soothing fair my widowed bride,
Whose sole sin was love of me.

"She will weep her woman's tears, she will pray her woman's prayer,
But her heart is young in pain, and her hopes will spring again
By the suntime of her years."

All these silent thoughts did swim o'er his eyes grown strange and dim,
Till his true men in the place wished they stood there face to face
With the foe instead of him.

"One last oath, my friends that were faithful hearts to do and dare!
Tower must fall, and bride be lost! swear me service worth the cost!"
Bold they stood around to swear.

"Each man clasp my hand and swear, by the deed we failed in there;
Not for vengeance, not for right, will ye strike one blow to-night!"
Pale they stood around to swear.

---

[1] *Sapped.* Dug under.

[2] *brake.* Brush, thicket.

[3] *sleek.* Soothe, calm.

"One last boon, young Ralph and Clare! faithful hearts to do and dare!
Bring that steed up from his stall, which she kissed before you all!
Guide him up the turret-stair.

"Ye shall harness him aright, and lead upward to this height,
Once in love, and twice in war, hath he borne me strong and fair;
He shall bear me far to-night."

Then his men looked to and fro, when they heard him speaking so.
"'Las! the noble heart," they thought; "he in sooth is grief-distraught.
Would we stood here with the foe!"

But a fire flashed from his eye, 'twixt their thought and their reply:
"Have ye so much time to waste? We who ride here must ride fast,
As we wish our foes to fly."

They have fetched the steed with care, in the harness he did wear,
Past the court, and through the doors, across the rushes of the floors,
But they goad him up the stair.

Then from out her bower chambere[1] did the Duchess May repair.
"Tell me now what is your need," said the lady, "of this steed,
That ye goad him up the stair?"

"Get thee back, sweet Duchess May! Hope is gone like yesterday;
One-half hour completes the breach; and thy lord grows wild of speech!
Get thee in, sweet lady, and pray.

"In the east tower, highest of all, loud he cries for steed from stall.
He would ride as far, quoth he, as for love and victory,
Though he rides the castle wall."

She stood up in bitter case, with a pale yet steady face,
Like a statue thunderstruck, which, though quivering, seems to look
Right against the thunder-place.

And her foot trod in, with pride, her own tears i' the stone beside,—
"Go to, faithful friends, go to!—judge no more what ladies do,—
No, nor how their lords may ride!"

Then the good steed's rein she took, and his neck did kiss and stroke;
Soft he neighed to answer her, and then followed up the stair,
For the love of her sweet look.

Oh, and steeply, steeply wound up the narrow stair around!
Oh, and closely, closely speeding, step by step beside her treading,
Did he follow, meek as hound.

On the east tower, highest of all—there, where never a hoof did fall—
Out they swept a vision steady, noble steed and lovely lady,
Calm as if in bower or stall.

Down she knelt at her lord's knee, and she looked up silently,
And he kissed her twice and thrice, for that look within her eyes
Which he could not bear to see.

---

[1] *chambere.* Pronounce "shom-bare."

Quoth he, "Get thee from this strife—and the sweet saints bless thy life!
In this hour I stand in need of my noble red-roan steed,
But no more of noble wife."

Quoth she, "Meekly have I done all thy biddings under sun;
But by all my womanhood, which is proved, so true and good,
I will never do this one.

"So the sweet saints be with me," did she utter solemnly,
"If a man, this eventide, on this castle wall will ride,
He shall ride the same with me."

Oh, he sprang up in the selle,[1] and he laughed out bitter-well:
"Wouldst thou ride among the leaves, as we used on other eves,
To hear chime a vesper bell?"

She clung closer to his knee: "Ay, beneath the cypress-tree!
Mock me not, for otherwhere than along the greenwood fair
Have I ridden fast with thee.

"Fast I rode with new-made vows, from my angry kinsman's house;
What, and would you men should reck[2] that I dared more for love's sake
As a bride than as a spouse?

"What, and would you it shall fall, as a proverb, before all,
That a bride may keep your side while through castle-gate you ride,
Yet eschew[3] the castle wall?"

Ho! the breach yawns into ruin, and roars up against her suing;[4]
With the inarticulate din, and the dreadful falling in,—
Shrieks of doing and undoing!

Evermore the foemen pour through the crash of window and door,
And the shouts of "Leigh and Leigh," and the shrieks of "Kill" and "Flee"
Strike up clear amid the roar.

Thrice he wrung her hands in twain, but they closed and closed again;
Wild she clung, as one, withstood, clasps a Christ upon the rood,[5]
In a spasm of deathly pain.

Back he reined his steed, back-thrown on the slippery coping-stone;
Back the iron hoofs did grind on the battlement behind,
Whence a hundred feet went down.

And his heel did press and goad on the quivering flank bestrode,—
"Friends and brothers, save my wife! Pardon, sweet, in change for life,—
But I ride alone to God!"

Straight as if the Holy Name had upbreathed her like a flame,
She upsprang, she rose upright—in his selle she sate in sight;
By her love she overcame.

And her head was on his breast, where she smiled as one at rest.
"Ring!" she cried, "O vesper bell, in the beechwood's old chapelle!
But the passing-bell[6] rings best."

[1] *selle.* Saddle.
[2] *reck.* Think.
[3] *eschew.* Avoid.
[4] *suing.* Beseeching.
[5] *rood.* Crucifix.
[6] *passing-bell.* Bell tolled for a death.

They have caught out at the rein, which Sir Guy threw loose—in vain—
For the horse in stark despair, with his front hoofs poised in air,
On the last verge rears amain.

Now he hangs—he rocks between, and his nostrils curdle in!
Now he shivers head and hoof, and the flakes of foam fall off,
And his face grows fierce and thin!

And a look of human woe from his staring eyes did go,
And a sharp cry uttered he, in a foretold agony
Of the headlong death below,—

And "Ring, ring, thou passing-bell!" still she cried, "i' the old chapelle!"
Then, back toppling, crashing back, a dead weight flung out to wrack,
Horse and riders overfell.

* * *

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,
And I read this ancient rime in the churchyard, while the chime
Slowly tolled for one at rest.

The abeles[1] moved in the sun, and the river smooth did run,
And the ancient rime rang strange, with its passion and its change,
Here, where all done lay undone.

Then, O spirits, did I say, ye who rode so fast that day,
Did star-wheels and angel wings, with their holy winnowings,
Keep beside you all the way?

Beating heart and burning brow, ye are very patient now,
And the children might be bold to pluck the king-cups from your mould
Ere a month had let them grow.

In your patience ye are strong; cold and heat ye take not wrong;
When the trumpet of the angel blows Eternity's evangel,
Time will seem to you not long.

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,
And I said in underbreath—All our life is mixed with death,
And who knoweth which is best?

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,
And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness His rest.

(1844)

[1] *abeles.* White poplars.

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX

ROBERT BROWNING

[There is no definite historical basis for this poem: we recognize the scene as the Netherlands, and the time as the early part of the 17th century, when the Low Countries were at war with Spain. The towns mentioned by Browning can be found on modern maps, showing the route of the riders eastward from Ghent to Aix,—the latter over the Belgian border in Germany.]

I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
"Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place;
I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique[1] right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-chime,
So Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

At Aershot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare through the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray:

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay, spur!
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her.
We'll remember at Aix"—for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

"How they'll greet us!"—and all in a moment his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,

---

[1] *pique.* Pommel.

Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is—friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news from Ghent.

(1845)

theme is that

THE BOY AND THE ANGEL

Iambic tetrameter

ROBERT BROWNING

[illegible] [illegible]

Morning, evening, noon and night,
"Praise God!" sang Theocrite.

Then to his poor trade he turned,
Whereby the daily meal was earned.

Hard he laboured, long and well;
O'er his work the boy's curls fell.

But ever, at each period,
He stopped and sang, "Praise God!"

Then back again his curls he threw,
And cheerful turned to work anew.

Said Blaise, the listening monk, "Well done;
I doubt not thou art heard, my son,

"As well as if thy voice to-day
Were praising God, the Pope's great way.

"This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome
Praises God from Peter's dome."

Said Theocrite, "Would God that I
Might praise him that great way, and die!"

Night passed, day shone,
And Theocrite was gone.

With God a day endures alway,
A thousand years are but a day.

God said in heaven, "Nor day nor night
Now brings the voice of my delight."

Then Gabriel, like a rainbow's birth,
Spread his wings and sank to earth;

Entered, in flesh, the empty cell,
Lived there, and played the craftsman well;

And morning, evening, noon and night,
Praised God in place of Theocrite.

And from a boy, to youth he grew:
The man put off the stripling's hue:

The man matured and fell away
Into the season of decay:

And ever o'er the trade he bent,
And ever lived on earth content.

(He did God's will; to him, all one
If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said "A praise is in mine ear;
There is no doubt in it, no fear:

"So sing old worlds, and so
New worlds that from my footstool go.

"Clearer loves sound other ways:
I miss my little human praise."

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off fell
The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'Twas Easter Day: he flew to Rome,
And paused above St. Peter's dome.

In the tiring-room close by
The great outer gallery,

With his holy vestments dight,[1]
Stood the new Pope, Theocrite:

And all his past career
Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade,
Till on his life the sickness weighed;

[1] *dight.* Clad.

And in his cell, when death drew near,
An angel in a dream brought cheer:

And rising from the sickness drear,
He grew a priest, and now stood here.

To the East with praise he turned,
And on his sight the angel burned.

"I bore thee from thy craftsman's cell,
And set thee here; I did not well.

"Vainly I left my angel-sphere,
Vain was thy dream of many a year.

"Thy voice's praise seemed weak; it dropped—
Creation's chorus stopped!

"Go back and praise again
The early way, while I remain.

"With that weak voice of our disdain,
Take up creation's pausing strain.

"Back to the cell and poor employ:
Resume the craftsman and the boy!"

Theocrite grew old at home;
A new Pope dwelt in Peter's dome.

One vanished as the other died:
They sought God side by side.

(1845)

Human element. 'Personal experience' the hero.

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

ROBERT BROWNING

[Ratisbon is the German Regensburg, in Bavaria; Napoleon stormed it in 1809, during an invasion of Austria. Lannes was one of his most trusted marshals.]

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:
  A mile or so away,
On a little mound, Napoleon
  Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
  Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
  Oppressive with his mind.

Just as perhaps he mused "My plans
  That soar, to earth may fall,
Let once my army-leader Lannes
  Waver at yonder wall,"—
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
  A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
  Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
  And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy:
  You hardly could suspect—
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
  Scarce any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
  Was all but shot in two.

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace
  We've got you Ratisbon!
The Marshal's in the market-place,
  And you'll be there anon
To see your flag-bird flap his vans
  Where I, to heart's desire,
Perched him!" The chief's eye flashed; his plans
  Soared up again like fire.

Epic quality

The chief's eye flashed; but presently
  Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother-eagle's eye
  When her bruised eaglet breathes;
"You're wounded!" "Nay," the soldier's pride
  Touched to the quick, he said:
"I'm killed, Sire!" And, his chief beside,
  Smiling the boy fell dead.

marks the individual

(1845)

THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND

ROBERT BROWNING

[The speaker is an Italian patriot who has been a leader in one or more of the uprisings against Austrian rule, such as took place in 1821, 1831, and 1848.]

That second time they hunted me
From hill to plain, from shore to sea,
And Austria, hounding far and wide
Her bloodhounds through the country-side,
Breathed hot and instant[1] on my trace,—
I made six days a hiding-place
Of that dry green old aqueduct
Where I and Charles, when boys, have plucked
The fire-flies from the roof above,
Bright creeping through the moss they love:

---

[1] *instant*. Close.

—How long it seems since Charles was lost!
Six days the soldiers crossed and crossed
The country in my very sight;
And when that peril ceased at night,
The sky broke out in red dismay
With signal fires; well, there I lay
Close covered o'er in my recess,
Up to the neck in ferns and cress,
Thinking on Metternich[1] our friend,
And Charles's miserable end,
And much beside, two days; the third,
Hunger o'ercame me when I heard
The peasants from the village go
To work among the maize; you know,
With us in Lombardy, they bring
Provisions packed on mules, a string
With little bells that cheer their task,
And casks, and boughs on every cask
To keep the sun's heat from the wine;
These I let pass in jingling line,
And, close on them, dear noisy crew,
The peasants from the village, too;
For at the very rear would troop
Their wives and sisters in a group
To help, I knew. When these had passed,
I threw my glove to strike the last,
Taking the chance; she did not start,
Much less cry out, but stooped apart,
One instant rapidly glanced round,
And saw me beckon from the ground;
A wild bush grows and hides my crypt;
She picked my glove up while she stripped
A branch off, then rejoined the rest
With that; my glove lay in her breast.
Then I drew breath: they disappeared:
It was for Italy I feared.

An hour, and she returned alone
Exactly where my glove was thrown.
Meanwhile came many thoughts; on me
Rested the hopes of Italy;
I had devised a certain tale
Which, when 'twas told her, could not fail
Persuade a peasant of its truth;
I meant to call a freak of youth
This hiding, and give hopes of pay,
And no temptation to betray.
But when I saw that woman's face,
Its calm simplicity of grace,
Our Italy's own attitude
In which she walked thus far, and stood,
Planting each naked foot so firm,
To crush the snake and spare the worm—
At first sight of her eyes, I said,
"I am that man upon whose head
They fix the price, because I hate
The Austrians over us: the State
Will give you gold—oh, gold so much!—
If you betray me to their clutch,
And be your death, for aught I know,
If once they find you saved their foe.
Now, you must bring me food and drink,
And also paper, pen and ink,
And carry safe what I shall write
To Padua, which you'll reach at night
Before the duomo[2] shuts; go in,
And wait till Tenebræ[3] begin;
Walk to the third confessional,
Between the pillar and the wall,
And kneeling whisper, *Whence comes peace?*
Say it a second time, then cease;
And if the voice inside returns,
From Christ and Freedom; what concerns
The cause of Peace?—for answer, slip
My letter where you placed your lip;
Then come back happy we have done
Our mother service—I, the son,
As you the daughter of our land!"

Three mornings more, she took her stand
In the same place, with the same eyes:
I was no surer of sunrise
Than of her coming. We conferred
Of her own prospects, and I heard
She had a lover—stout and tall,
She said—then let her eyelids fall,
"He could do much"—as if some doubt
Entered her heart,—then, passing out,
"She could not speak for others, who
Had other thoughts; herself she knew:"
And so she brought me drink and food.
After four days, the scouts pursued
Another path; at last arrived
The help my Paduan friends contrived
To furnish me: she brought the news.
For the first time I could not choose
But kiss her hand, and lay my own
Upon her head—"This faith was shown
To Italy, our mother; she
Uses my hand and blesses thee."
She followed down to the sea-shore;
I left and never saw her more.

How very long since I have thought
Concerning—much less wished for—aught
Beside the good of Italy,
For which I live and mean to die!

---

[1] *Metternich.* The Austrian prime minister.

[2] *duomo.* Cathedral.

[3] *Tenebræ.* A Holy Week service.

I never was in love; and since
Charles proved false, what shall now convince
My inmost heart I have a friend?
However, if I pleased to spend
Real wishes on myself—say, three—
I know at least what one should be.
I would grasp Metternich until
I felt his red wet throat distil
In blood through these two hands. And next
—Nor much for that am I perplexed—
Charles, perjured traitor, for his part,
Should die slow of a broken heart
Under his new employers. Last
—Ah, there, what should I wish? For fast
Do I grow old and out of strength.
If I resolved to seek at length
My father's house again, how scared
They all would look, and unprepared!
My brothers live in Austria's pay
—Disowned me long ago, men say;
And all my early mates who used
To praise me so—perhaps induced
More than one early step of mine—
Are turning wise: while some opine
"Freedom grows license," some suspect
"Haste breeds delay," and recollect
They always said such premature
Beginnings never could endure!
So, with a sullen "All's for best,"
The land seems settling to its rest.
I think then, I should wish to stand
This evening in that dear, lost land,
Over the sea the thousand miles,
And know if yet that woman smiles
With the calm smile; some little farm
She lives in there, no doubt: what harm
If I sat on the door-side bench,
And, while her spindle made a trench
Fantastically in the dust,
Inquired of all her fortunes—just
Her children's ages and their names,
And what may be the husband's aims
For each of them. I'd talk this out,
And sit there, for an hour about,
Then kiss her hand once more, and lay
Mine on her head, and go my way.

So much for idle wishing—how
It steals the time! To business now.

(1845)

ares that Beauty* sadness goes together.

THE RAVEN

EDGAR ALLAN POE

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—
Only this and nothing more."

[illegible] connotation

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow; vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore,
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Nameless *here* for evermore.

onomat. running through passage
onomat.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating,
"'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—
This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger: hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the door—
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there, wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word "Lenore!"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word "Lenore!"
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping, somewhat louder than before.
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore,—
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore—
'Tis the wind and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he, not a minute stopped or stayed he,
But with mien of lord or lady perched above my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—
Perched and sat, and nothing more.

mere association infers or suggests depth of blackness (foolish, shines)

Then, this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
Ghastly, grim, and ancient Raven, wandering from the nightly shore:
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the night's Plutonian shore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

to
Poe desires
have bird
the word
it means
[illegible]
to
my

Much I marveled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning, little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door—
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing farther then he uttered, not a feather then he fluttered;
Till I scarcely more than muttered, "Other friends have flown before;
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have flown before."
Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore,
Till the dirges of his hope that melancholy burden bore
Of 'Never—nevermore.'"

But the Raven still beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore,
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

connotation - in atmosphere of poem - there nothing in word croaking of pre

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Thus I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er,
But whose velvet violet lining, with the lamp-light gloating o'er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by seraphim whose footfalls tinkled on the tufted floor.
"Wretch!"[1] I cried, "thy God hath lent thee,—by these angels he hath sent thee,
Respite—respite and nepenthe[2] from thy memories of Lenore!
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil, prophet still, if bird or devil!
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—
On this home by horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore,
Is there—is there balm in Gilead?[3]—tell me—tell me, I implore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, thing of evil, prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,[4]
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked, up-starting;
"Get thee back into the tempest and the night's Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—Quit the bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore!

(1845)

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[1] He addresses himself.
[2] *nepenthe.* A magic drink supposed to induce forgetfulness.
[3] Cf. *Jeremiah* 8: 22: "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?"
[4] *Aidenn.* Eden.

has made the girl more human.

IPHIGENEIA AND AGAMEMNON

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

[An incident in the story of the Trojan War. After gathering at Aulis for the expedition against Troy, the Greek fleet was becalmed. Calchas the prophet announced that Agamemnon had offended the goddess Artemis, and could only win her favor and the desired winds for the fleet by the sacrifice of whatever was dearest to him. This was finally determined to be his daughter Iphigeneia.]

Iphigeneia, when she heard her doom
At Aulis, and when all beside the King
Had gone away, took his right hand, and said,
"O father! I am young and very happy.
I do not think the pious Calchas heard
Distinctly what the Goddess spake. Old-age
Obscures the senses. If my nurse, who knew
My voice so well, sometimes misunderstood
While I was resting on her knee both arms
And hitting it to make her mind my words,
And looking in her face, and she in mine,
Might he not also hear one word amiss,
Spoken from so far off, even from Olympus?"
The father placed his cheek upon her head,
And tears dropped down it, but the king of men
Replied not. Then the maiden spake once more.
"O father! sayst thou nothing? Hear'st thou not
Me, whom thou ever hast, until this hour,
Listened to fondly, and awakened me
To hear my voice amid the voice of birds,
When it was inarticulate as theirs,
And the down deadened it within the nest?"
He moved her gently from him, silent still,
And this, and this alone, brought tears from her,
Although she saw fate nearer: then with sighs,
"I thought to have laid down my hair[1] before
Benignant Artemis, and not have dimmed
Her polished altar with my virgin blood;
I thought to have selected the white flowers
To please the Nymphs, and to have asked of each
By name, and with no sorrowful regret,
Whether, since both my parents willed the change,
I might at Hymen's feet bend my clipped brow;[2]
And (after those who mind us girls the most)
Adore our own Athena, that she would
Regard me mildly with her azure eyes,
But father! to see you no more, and see
Your love, O father! go ere I am gone..."
Gently he moved her off, and drew her back,
Bending his lofty head far over hers,
And the dark depths of nature heaved and burst.
He turned away; not far, but silent still.
She now first shuddered; for in him, so nigh,
So long a silence seemed the approach of death,
And like it. Once again she raised her voice.
"O father! if the ships are now detained,
And all your vows move not the gods above,
When the knife strikes me there will be one prayer
The less to them: and purer can there be
Any, or more fervent than the daughter's prayer
For her dear father's safety and success?"
A groan that shook him shook not his resolve.
An aged man now entered, and without
One word, stepped slowly on, and took the wrist
Of the pale maiden. She looked up and saw
The fillet of the priest and calm cold eyes.
Then turned she where her parent stood, and cried
"O father! grieve no more: the ships can sail."

(1846)

reconciliation met

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[1] A form of sacrifice on the part of maidens.

[2] That is, whether I might marry.

fate

Dominating [illegible]

SIR HUMPHREY GILBERT

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

[After planting the first English colony in North America at St. John's, Newfoundland, on August 5, 1583, Sir Humphrey Gilbert found it necessary to return to England. He sailed with two ships,—*The Golden Hind* and *The Squirrel*, and was lost with the latter vessel north of the Azores, about September 9, 1583. *The Golden Hind* returned to England safely; its report is the basis of Longfellow's version of Sir Humphrey's last known words. Longfellow supposes Campobello, on the New Brunswick coast, to have been the starting-point for the voyage.]

Southward with fleet of ice
  Sailed the corsair Death;
Wild and fast blew the blast,
  And the east-wind was his breath.

His lordly ships of ice
  Glisten in the sun;
On each side, like pennons wide,
  Flashing crystal streamlets run.

His sails of white sea-mist
  Dripped with silver rain;
But where he passed there were cast
  Leaden shadows o'er the main.

Eastward from Campobello
  Sir Humphrey Gilbert sailed;
Three days or more seaward he bore,
  Then, alas! the land-wind failed.

Alas! the land-wind failed,
  And ice-cold grew the night;
And nevermore, on sea or shore,
  Should Sir Humphrey see the light.

He sat upon the deck,
  The Book was in his hand;
"Do not fear! Heaven is as near,"
  He said, "by water as by land!"

In the first watch of the night,
  Without a signal's sound,
Out of the sea, mysteriously,
  The fleet of Death rose all around.

The moon and the evening star
  Were hanging in the shrouds;
Every mast, as it passed,
  Seemed to rake the passing clouds.

They grappled with their prize,
  At midnight black and cold!
As of a rock was the shock;
  Heavily the ground-swell rolled.

Southward through day and dark,
  They drift in close embrace,
With mist and rain, o'er the open main;
  Yet there seems no change of place.

Southward, forever southward,
  They drift through dark and day;
And like a dream, in the Gulf Stream
  Sinking, vanish all away.

(1849) Have a subtle + vivid
The influence of sea itself on
the rhythm + structure of line.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

MATTHEW ARNOLD

[This poem is based on a legend, found in many places and various forms, and particularly in an old Danish ballad, of a maiden who was wooed and won by a merman, but later, stricken by conscience and homesickness, returned to land. The merman is supposed to be speaking to his children, after a fruitless visit to the town.]

Imagination

Come, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray,
Children, dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go—
Call once yet!
In a voice that she will know:
"Margaret! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear;
Children's voices, wild with pain—
Surely she will come again!
Call her once and come away;
This way, this way!
"Mother dear, we cannot stay!
The wild white horses foam and fret."
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down;
Call no more!
One last look at the white-wall'd town,
And the little gray church on the windy
    shore,
Then come down!
She will not come though you call all day;
Come away, come away!

this is a
to large degree
music + sound
fantasy of

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea;
She said: "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little gray church on the shore to-day.
ragic
nate
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman! here with thee."
I said: "Go up, dear heart, through the waves;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves!"
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say;
Come!" I said: and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town;
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
To the little gray church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes.
She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
"Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here!
Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone;
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book!
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more!
Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!
Down to the depths of the sea!
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy!
For the priest and the bell, and the holy well;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun!"
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh;
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children;
Come children, come down!
The hoarse wind blows coldly;
Lights shine in the town.

She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl;
Singing: "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she!
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring tides are low;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back down,
Singing: "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

(1849)

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

MATTHEW ARNOLD

[The story of this poem is from the great Persian epic, or "Book of Kings," the *Shahnamah*. Arnold develops it in the style of the Homeric epic, and the numerous poetic comparisons or "Homeric similes" (as in lines 110-115, 154-157, 160-169, etc.) are due to this. The opening word "And" is intended to show that the poem presents an episode in a longer story. The scene is in the midst of an invasion of Persia by the Tartars, commanded by Peran-Wisa, general of the Tartar king. The young warrior Sohrab, though his father was Persian, had grown to manhood among the Tartars, his mother's people, and is now their champion. The river Oxus was at this time the boundary of Persia; it rises north of India in the Pamir plateau, and flows northwest to the Aral Sea. At certain points (as lines 388-397 and 709-715) Arnold introduces the Oriental philosophy of fatalism.]

And the first gray of morning fill'd the east,
And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream.
But all the Tartar camp along the stream
Was hush'd, and still the men were plunged in sleep;
Sohrab alone, he slept not; all night long
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed;
But when the gray dawn stole into his tent,
He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,
And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent;
And went abroad into the cold wet fog,
Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent.
Through the black Tartar tents he pass'd, which stood
Clustering like beehives on the low flat strand
Of Oxus, where the summer-floods o'erflow
When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere;
Through the black tents he pass'd, o'er that low strand,
And to a hillock came, a little back
From the stream's brink—the spot where first a boat,
Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.
The men of former times had crown'd the top
With a clay fort; but that was fall'n, and now
The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,
A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread.
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood
Upon the thick piled carpets in the tent,
And found the old man sleeping on his bed
Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms.
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step
Was dull'd; for he slept light, an old man's sleep;
And he rose quickly on one arm, and said:—
"Who art thou? for it is not yet clear dawn.
Speak! is there news, or any night alarm?"
But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said:—
"Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa! it is I.
The sun is not yet risen, and the foe
Sleep; but I sleep not; all night long I lie
Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee.
For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek

Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
In Samarcand, before the army march'd;
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.
Thou know'st if, since from Ader-baijan first
I came among the Tartars and bore arms,
I have still served Afrasiab well, and shown,
At my boy's years, the courage of a man.
This too thou know'st, that while I still bear on
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,
And beat the Persians back on every field,
I seek one man, one man, and one alone—
Rustum, my father; who I hoped should greet,
Should one day greet, upon some well-fought field,
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.
So I long hoped, but him I never find.
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.
Let the two armies rest to-day; but I
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords
To meet me, man to man; if I prevail,
Rustum will surely hear it; if I fall—
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.
Dim is the rumor of a common fight,
Where host meets host, and many names are sunk;
But of a single combat fame speaks clear."
He spoke; and Peran-Wisa took the hand
Of the young man in his, and sigh'd, and said:—
"O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine!
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,
And share the battle's common chance with us
Who love thee, but must press for ever first,
In single fight incurring single risk,
To find a father thou hast never seen?
That were far best, my son, to stay with us
Unmurmuring; in our tents, while it is war,
And when 'tis truce, then in Afrasiab's towns.
But, if this one desire indeed rules all,
To seek out Rustum—seek him not through fight!
Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,
O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son!
But far hence seek him, for he is not here.
For now it is not as when I was young,
When Rustum was in front of every fray;
But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,
In Seistan, with Zal, his father old,
Whether that his own mighty strength at last
Feels the abhorr'd approaches of old age,
Or in some quarrel with the Persian king.
There go!—Thou wilt not? Yet my heart forebodes
Danger of death awaits thee on this field.
Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost
To us; fain therefore send thee hence, in peace
To seek thy father, not seek single fights
In vain;—but who can keep the lion's cub
From ravening, and who govern Rustum's son?
Go, I will grant thee what thy heart desires."
So said he, and dropp'd Sohrab's hand, and left
His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay;
And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat
He pass'd, and tied his sandals on his feet,
And threw a white cloak round him, and he took
In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword;
And on his head he set his sheep-skin cap,
Black, glossy, curl'd, the fleece of Kara-Kul;
And raised the curtain of his tent, and call'd
His herald to his side, and went abroad.
The sun by this had risen, and clear'd the fog
From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands.
And from their tents the Tartar horsemen filed
Into the open plain; so Haman bade—
Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa ruled
The host, and still was in his lusty prime.
From their black tents, long files of horse, they stream'd;
As when some gray November morn the files,
In marching order spread, of long-neck'd cranes
Stream over Casbin and the southern slopes
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,
Or some frore[1] Caspian reed-bed, southward bound

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[1] *frore.* Frozen.

For the warm Persian sea-board—so they stream'd.
The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,
First, with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears;
Large men, large steeds; who from Bokhara come
And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares.
Next, the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south,
The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,
And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands;
Light men and on light steeds, who only drink
The acrid milk of camels, and their wells.
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came
From far, and a more doubtful service own'd;
The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks
Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards
And close-set skull-caps; and those wilder hordes
Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste,
Kalmucks and unkempt Kuzzaks, tribes who stray
Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,
Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere;
These all filed out from camp into the plain.
And on the other side the Persians form'd;—
First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seem'd,
The Ilyats of Khorassan; and behind,
The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,
Marshall'd battalions bright in burnish'd steel.
But Peran-Wisa with his herald came,
Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,
And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks.
And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw
That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back,
He took his spear, and to the front he came,
And check'd his ranks, and fix'd them where they stood.
And the old Tartar came upon the sand
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said:
"Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear!
Let there be truce between the hosts to-day.
But choose a champion from the Persian lords
To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man."
As, in the country, on a morn in June,
When the dew glistens on the pearlèd ears,
A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy—
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they loved.
But as a troop of pedlars from Cabool
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,
That vast sky-neighboring mountain of milk snow;
Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they pass
Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the snow,
Choked by the air, and scarce can they themselves
Slake their parch'd throats with sugar'd mulberries—
In single file they move, and stop their breath,
For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging snows—
So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.
And to Ferood his brother chiefs came up
To counsel: Gudurz and Zoarrah came,
And Feraburz, who ruled the Persian host
Second, and was the uncle of the king;
These came and counsell'd, and then Gudurz said:—
"Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up,
Yet champion have we none to match this youth.
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.
But Rustum came last night; aloof he sits
And sullen, and has pitch'd his tents apart.
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear
The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name.
Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.

Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up."
So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and cried:—
"Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said!
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man."
He spake: and Peran-Wisa turn'd, and strode
Back through the opening squadrons to his tent.
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,
And cross'd the camp which lay behind, and reach'd,
Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,
Just pitch'd; the high pavilion in the midst
Was Rustum's, and his men lay camp'd around.
And Gudurz enter'd Rustum's tent and found
Rustum; his morning meal was done, but still
The table stood before him, charged with food—
A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,
And dark green melons; and there Rustum sate
Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist,
And play'd with it; but Gudurz came and stood
Before him; and he look'd, and saw him stand,
And with a cry sprang up and dropp'd the bird,
And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said:—
"Welcome! these eyes could see no better sight,
What news? but sit down first, and eat and drink."
But Gudurz stood in the tent door, and said:—
"Not now! a time will come to eat and drink,
But not to-day; to-day has other needs,
The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze;
For from the Tartars is a challenge brought
To pick a champion from the Persian lords
To fight their champion—and thou know'st his name—
Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.
O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's!
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart;
And he is young, and Iran's[1] chiefs are old,
Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to thee.
Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose!"
He spoke; but Rustum answer'd with a smile:—
"Go to! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I
Am older; if the young are weak, the king
Errs strangely; for the king, for Kai Khosroo,
Himself is young, and honors younger men,
And lets the aged moulder to their graves.
Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young—
The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I.
For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?
For would that I myself had such a son,
And not that one slight helpless girl I have—
A son so famed, so brave, to send to war,
And I to tarry with the snow-hair'd Zal,
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,
And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,
And he has none to guard his weak old age.
There would I go, and hang my armor up,
And with my great name fence that weak old man,
And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,
And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings,
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more."
He spoke, and smiled; and Gudurz made reply:—
"What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,
When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks
Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,
Hidest thy face? Take heed lest men should say:

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[1] *Iran.* Persia.

Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,
And shuns to peril it with younger men."
And, greatly moved, then Rustum made reply:—
"O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words?
Thou knowest better words than this to say.
What is one more, one less, obscure or famed,
Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?
Are not they mortal, am not I myself?
But who for men of nought would do great deeds?
Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame!
But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms;
Let not men say of Rustum, he was match'd
In single fight with any mortal man."
He spoke, and frown'd; and Gudurz turn'd, and ran
Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy—
Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.
But Rustum strode to his tent-door, and call'd
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,
And clad himself in steel; the arms he chose
Were plain, and on his shield was no device,
Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,
And, from the fluted spine atop, a plume
Of horsehair waved, a scarlet horsehair plume.
So arm'd, he issued forth; and Ruksh, his horse,
Follow'd him like a faithful hound at heel—
Ruksh, whose renown was noised through all the earth,
The horse whom Rustum on a foray once
Did in Bokhara by the river find
A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,
And rear'd him; a bright bay, with lofty crest,
Dight[1] with a saddle-cloth of broider'd green
Crusted with gold, and on the ground were work'd
All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know.
So follow'd, Rustum left his tents, and cross'd
The camp, and to the Persian host appear'd.
And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts
Hail'd; but the Tartars knew not who he was.
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,
By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands—
So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came.
And Rustum to the Persian front advanced,
And Sohrab arm'd in Haman's tent, and came.
And as afield the reapers cut a swath
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,
And on each side are squares of standing corn,
And in the midst a stubble, short and bare—
So on each side were squares of men, with spears
Bristling, and in the midst the open sand.
And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast
His eyes toward the Tartar tents, and saw
Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he came.
As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge
Who with numb blacken'd fingers makes her fire—
At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn,
When the frost flowers the whiten'd window-panes—
And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts
Of that poor drudge may be; so Rustum eyes
The unknown adventurous youth, who from afar
Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth
All the most valiant chiefs; long he perused
His spirited air, and wonder'd who he was.
For very young he seem'd, tenderly rear'd;

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[1] *Dight.* Decked.

Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,
By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound—
So slender Sohrab seem'd, so softly rear'd.
And a deep pity enter'd Rustum's soul
As he beheld him coming; and he stood,
And beckon'd to him with his hand, and said:—
"O thou young man, the air of Heaven is soft,
And warm, and pleasant; but the grave is cold!
Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.
Behold me! I am vast, and clad in iron,
And tried; and I have stood on many a field
Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe—
Never was that field lost, or that foe saved.
O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?
Be govern'd! quit the Tartar host, and come
To Iran, and be as my son to me,
And fight beneath my banner till I die!
There are no youths in Iran brave as thou."
So he spake, mildly; Sohrab heard his voice,
The mighty voice of Rustum, and he saw
His giant figure planted on the sand,
Sole, like some single tower, which a chief
Hath builded on the waste in former years
Against the robbers; and he saw that head,
Streak'd with its first gray hairs;—hope fill'd his soul,
And he ran forward and embraced his knees,
And clasp'd his hand within his own, and said:—
"O, by thy father's head! by thine own soul!
Art thou not Rustum? speak! art thou not he?"
But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth,
And turn'd away, and spake to his own soul:—
"Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean!
False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.
For if I now confess this thing he asks.
And hide it not, but say: *Rustum is here!*
He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,
But he will find some pretext not to fight,
And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,
A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.
And on a feast-tide, in Afrasiab's hall,
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry:
'I challenged once, when the two armies camp'd
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords
To cope with me in single fight; but they
Shrank, only Rustum dared; then he and I
Changed gifts, and went on equal terms away.'
So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud;
Then were the chiefs of Iran shamed through me."
And then he turn'd, and sternly spake aloud:—
"Rise! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus
Of Rustum? I am here, whom thou hast call'd
By challenge forth; make good thy vaunt, or yield!
Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight?
Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee!
For well I know, that did great Rustum stand
Before thy face this day, and were reveal'd,
There would be then no talk of fighting more.
But being what I am, I tell thee this—
Do thou record it in thine inmost soul:
Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt and yield,
Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds
Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer-floods,
Oxus in summer wash them all away."
He spoke; and Sohrab answer'd, on his feet:—
"Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so!
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.
Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand

Here on this field, there were no fighting then.
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.
Begin! thou art more vast, more dread than I,
And thou art proved, I know, and I am young—
But yet success sways with the breath of Heaven.
And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.
For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,
Poised on the top of a huge wave of fate,
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.
And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,
We know not, and no search will make us know;
Only the event will teach us in its hour."
He spoke, and Rustum answer'd not, but hurl'd
His spear; down from the shoulder, down it came,
As on some partridge in the corn a hawk,
That long has tower'd in the airy clouds,
Drops like a plummet; Sohrab saw it come,
And sprang aside, quick as a flash; the spear
Hiss'd, and went quivering down into the sand,
Which it sent flying wide;—then Sohrab threw
In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield; sharp rang,
The iron plates rang sharp, but turn'd the spear.
And Rustum seized his club, which none but he
Could wield; an unlopp'd trunk it was, and huge,
Still rough—like those which men in treeless plains
To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,
Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up
By their dark springs, the wind in winter-time
Hath made in Himalayan forests wrack,
And strewn the channels with torn boughs—so huge
The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck
One stroke; but again Sohrab sprang aside,
Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came
Thundering to earth, and leap'd from Rustum's hand.
And Rustum follow'd his own blow, and fell
To his knees, and with his fingers clutch'd the sand.
And now might Sohrab have unsheathed his sword,
And pierced the mighty Rustum while he lay
Dizzy, and on his knees, and choked with sand;
But he look'd on, and smiled, nor bared his sword,
But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said:—
"Thou strik'st too hard! that club of thine will float
Upon the summer-floods, and not my bones.
But rise, and be not wroth! not wroth am I;
No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul.
Thou say'st thou art not Rustum; be it so!
Who art thou then, that canst so touch my soul?
Boy as I am, I have seen battles too—
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,
And heard their hollow roar of dying men;
But never was my heart thus touch'd before.
Are they from Heaven, these softenings of the heart?
O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven!
Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand,
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.
There are enough foes in the Persian host,
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang;
Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou

Mayst fight; fight *them*, when they confront thy spear!
But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me!"
He ceased, but while he spake, Rustum had risen,
And stood erect, trembling with rage; his club
He left to lie, but had regain'd his spear,
Whose fiery point now in his mail'd right-hand
Blazed bright and baleful, like that autumn-star,
The baleful sign of fevers; dust had soil'd
His stately crest, and dimm'd his glittering arms.
His breast heav'd, his lips foam'd, and twice his voice
Was chok'd with rage; at last these words broke way:—
"Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands!
Curl'd minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words!
Fight, let me hear thy hateful voice no more!
Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to dance;
But on the Oxus-sands, and in the dance
Of battle, and with me, who make no play
Of war; I fight it out, and hand to hand.
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine!
Remember all thy valor; try thy feints
And cunning! all the pity I had is gone;
Because thou hast shamed me before both the hosts
With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles."
He spoke, and Sohrab kindled at his taunts,
And he too drew his sword; at once they rush'd
Together, as two eagles on one prey
Come rushing down together from the clouds,
One from the east, one from the west; their shields
Dash'd with a clang together, and a din
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
Of hewing axes, crashing trees—such blows
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hail'd.
And you would say that sun and stars took part
In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud
Grew suddenly in heaven, and dark'd the sun
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,
And in a sandy whirlwind wrapp'd the pair.
In gloom they twain were wrapp'd, and they alone;
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes
And laboring breath; first Rustum struck the shield
Which Sohrab held stiff out; the steel-spiked spear
Rent the tough plates, but fail'd to reach the skin,
And Rustum pluck'd it back with angry groan.
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,
Nor clove its steel quite through; but all the crest
He shore away, and that proud horsehair plume,
Never till now defiled, sank to the dust;
And Rustum bow'd his head; but then the gloom
Grew blacker, thunder rumbled in the air,
And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh, the horse,
Who stood at hand, utter'd a dreadful cry;—
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar
Of some pain'd desert-lion, who all day
Hath trail'd the hunter's javelin in his side
And comes at night to die upon the sand.
The two hosts heard that cry, and quaked for fear,
And Oxus curdled as it cross'd his stream.
But Sohrab heard, and quail'd not, but rush'd on,
And struck again; and again Rustum bow'd
His head; but this time all the blade, like glass,

Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,
And in the hand the hilt remain'd alone.
Then Rustum raised his head; his dreadful eyes
Glared, and he shook on high his menacing spear,
And shouted: *Rustum!*—Sohrab heard that shout,
And shrank amazed; back he recoil'd one step.
And scann'd with blinking eyes the advancing form;
And then he stood bewilder'd; and he dropp'd
His covering shield, and the spear pierced his side.
He reel'd, and staggering back, sank to the ground.
And then the gloom dispers'd, and the wind fell,
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all
The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair—
Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.
  Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum began:—
"Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,
And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent.
Or else that the great Rustum would come down
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.
And then that all the Tartar host would praise
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame,
To glad thy father in his weak old age.
Fool, thou art slain, and by an unknown man!
Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old."
  And with a fearless mien, Sohrab replied:—
"Unknown thou art; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain.
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man!
No! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.
For were I match'd with ten such men as thee,
And I were that which till to-day I was,
They should be lying here, I standing there.
But that beloved name unnerv'd my arm—
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield
Fall; and thy spear transfix'd an unarm'd foe.
And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate.
But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to hear:
The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death!
My father, whom I seek through all the world,
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee!"
  As when some hunter in the spring hath found
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,
Upon the craggy isle of a hill-lake,
And pierced her with an arrow as she rose,
And follow'd her to find her where she fell
Far off;—anon her mate comes winging back
From hunting, and a great way off descries
His huddling young left sole; at that, he checks
His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,
A heap of fluttering feathers—never more
Shall the lake glass[1] her, flying over it;
Never the black and dripping precipices
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by,—
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss,
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood
Over his dying son, and knew him not.
  But, with a cold incredulous voice, he said:—
"What prate is this of fathers and revenge?
The mighty Rustum never had a son."
  And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied:—
"Ah yes, he had! and that lost son am I.

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[1] *glass.* Reflect.

Surely the news will one day reach his ear,
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,
Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.
Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son!
What will that grief, what will that vengeance be?
Oh, could I live, till I that grief had seen!
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells
With that old king, her father, who grows gray
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.
Her most I pity, who no more will see
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
With spoils and honor, when the war is done.
But a dark rumor will be bruited[1] up,
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear;
And then will that defenceless woman learn
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more,
But that in battle with a nameless foe,
By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain."
He spoke; and as he ceased, he wept aloud,
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.
He spoke; but Rustum listen'd, plung'd in thought.
Nor did he yet believe it was his son
Who spoke, although he call'd back names he knew;
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all—
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear
Rustum should seek the boy, to train in arms;
And so he deem'd that either Sohrab took,
By a false boast, the style[2] of Rustum's son;
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.
So deem'd he; yet he listen'd, plung'd in thought,
And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
Of the bright rocking ocean sets to shore
At the full moon; tears gather'd in his eyes;
For he remember'd his own early youth,
And all its bounding rapture; as, at dawn,
The shepherd from his mountain-lodge descries
A far, bright city, smitten by the sun,
Through many rolling clouds—so Rustum saw
His youth; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom;
And that old king, her father, who loved well
His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child
With joy; and all the pleasant life they led,
They three, in that long-distant summer-time—
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
And hound, and morn on those delightful hills
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that youth,
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,
Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe
Of an unskilful gardener has been cut,
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
On the mown, dying grass—so Sohrab lay,
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
And Rustum gazed on him with grief, and said:—
"O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have loved.
Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
Have told thee false—thou art not Rustum's son.
For Rustum had no son; one child he had—
But one—a girl; who with her mother now
Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us—
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war."
But Sohrab answer'd him in wrath; for now
The anguish of the deep-fix'd spear grew fierce,

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[1] *bruited.* Noised.
[2] *style.* Title.

And he desirèd to draw forth the steel,
And let the blood flow free, and so to die—
But first he would convince his stubborn foe;
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said:—
"Man, who art thou who dost deny my words?
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,
And falsehood, while I lived, was far from mine.
I tell thee, prick'd upon this arm I bear
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,
That she might prick it on the babe she bore."
He spoke; and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks,
And his knees totter'd, and he smote his hand
Against his breast, his heavy mailèd hand,
That the hard iron corslet clank'd aloud;
And to his heart he press'd the other hand,
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said:—
"Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie!
If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son."
Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed
His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm,
And show'd a sign in faint vermilion points
Prick'd; as a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
An emperor's gift—at early morn he paints,
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands—
So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.
It was that griffin, which of old rear'd Zal,
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,
A helpless babe, among the mountain-rocks;
Him that kind creature found, and rear'd, and loved—
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.
And Sohrab bared that image on his arm,
And himself scann'd it long with mournful eyes,
And then he touch'd it with his hand and said:—
"How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?"
He spoke; but Rustum gazed, and gazed, and stood
Speechless; and then he utter'd one sharp cry:
O boy—thy father!—and his voice chok'd there.
And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,
And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.
But Sohrab crawl'd to where he lay, and cast
His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips,
And with fond faltering fingers strok'd his cheeks,
Trying to call him back to life; and life
Came back to Rustum, and he oped his eyes,
And they stood wide with horror; and he seized
In both his hands the dust which lay around,
And threw it on his head, and smirch'd his hair,—
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms;
And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,
And his sobs chok'd him; and he clutch'd his sword,
To draw it, and for ever let life out.
But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,
And with a soothing voice he spake, and said:—
"Father, forbear! for I but meet to-day
The doom which at my birth was written down
In heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious hand.
Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke, too,
I know it! but fate trod those promptings down
Under its iron heel; fate, fate engaged
The strife, and hurl'd me on my father's spear.

But let us speak no more of this: I find
My father; let me feel that I have found!
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
And wash them with thy tears, and say: *My son!*
Quick! quick! for number'd are my sands of life,
And swift; for like the lightning to this field
I came, and like the wind I go away—
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind.
But it was writ in heaven that this should be."
  So said he, and his voice released the heart
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth; he cast
His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,
And kiss'd him. And awe fell on both the hosts,
When they saw Rustum's grief; and Ruksh, the horse,
With his head bowing to the ground and mane
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe
First to the one, then to the other moved
His head, as if inquiring what their grief
Might mean; and from his dark, compassionate eyes,
The big warm tears roll'd down, and caked the sand.
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said:—
  "Ruksh, now thou grievest; but, O Ruksh; thy feet
Should first have rotted on their nimble joints,
Or ere they brought thy master to this field!"
  But Sohrab look'd upon the horse and said;—
"Is this, then, Ruksh? How often, in past days,
My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed,
My terrible father's terrible horse! and said,
That I should one day find thy lord and thee.
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane!
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I;
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
And snuff'd the breezes of my father's home.
And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan,
And seen the River of Helmund, and the Lake
Of Zirrah; and the aged Zal himself
Has often stroked thy neck, and given thee food,
Corn in a golden platter soak'd with wine,
And said: *O Ruksh! bear Rustum well!*—but I
Have never known my grandsire's furrow'd face,
Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,
Nor slaked my thirst at the clear Helmund stream;
But lodged among my father's foes, and seen
Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand,
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,
And the black Toorkmun tents; and only drunk
The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,
Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,
The northern Sir; and this great Oxus stream,
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."
  Then, with a heavy groan, Rustum bewail'd:—
"Oh, that its waves were flowing over me!
Oh, that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!"
  But, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied:—
"Desire not that, my father! thou must live.
For some are born to do great deeds, and live,
As some are born to be obscured, and die.
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,
And reap a second glory in thine age;
Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.
But come! thou seest this great host of men
Which follow me; I pray thee, slay not these!
Let me entreat for them; what have they done?
They follow'd me, my hope, my fame, my star.
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.

But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,
But carry me with thee to Seistan,
And place me on a bed, and mourn for me,
Thou, and the snow-hair'd Zal, and all thy friends,
And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above my bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all;
That so the passing horseman on the waste
May see my tomb a great way off, and cry:
Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,
Whom his great father did in ignorance kill!
And I be not forgotten in my grave."
And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied:—
"Fear not; as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,
So shall it be; for I will burn my tents,
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,
And carry thee away to Seistan,
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends,
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all,
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave.
And I will spare thy host; yea, let them go;
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace!
What should I do with slaying any more?
For would that all that I have ever slain
Might be once more alive; my bitterest foes,
And they who were call'd champions in their time,
And through whose death I won that fame I have—
And I were nothing but a common man,
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown,
So thou mightest live too, my son, my son!
Or rather would that I, even I myself,
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,
Not thou of mine! and I might die, not thou;
And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan;
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine;
And say: *O son, I weep thee not too sore,*
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end!
But now in blood and battles was my youth,
And full of blood and battles is my age,
And I shall never end this life of blood."
Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied:—
"A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man!
But thou shalt yet have peace; only not now,
Not yet! but thou shalt have it on that day,
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,
Thou and the other peers of Kai Khosroo,
Returning home over the salt blue sea,
From laying thy dear master in his grave."
And Rustum gazed in Sohrab's face, and said:—
"Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea!
Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure."
He spoke; and Sohrab smiled on him, and took
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eased
His wound's imperious anguish; but the blood
Came welling from the open gash, and life
Flow'd with the stream;—all down his cold white side
The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soil'd,
Like the soil'd tissue of white violets
Left, freshly gather'd, on the native bank,
By children whom their nurses call with haste
Indoors from the sun's eye; his head droop'd low,
His limbs grew slack; motionless, white, he lay—
White, with eyes closed; only when heavy gasps,
Deep heavy gasps, quivering through all his frame,

Convuls'd him back to life, he open'd them,
And fix'd them feebly on his father's face;
Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from his limbs
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,
And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world.
  So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead;
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.
As those black granite pillars, once high-rear'd
By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear
His house, now 'mid their broken flights of steps
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side—
So in the sand lay Rustum by his son.
  And night came down over the solemn waste,
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,
And darken'd all; and a cold fog, with night,
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,
As of a great assembly loos'd, and fires
Began to twinkle through the fog; for now
Both armies moved to camp, and took their meal;
The Persians took it on the open sands
Southward, the Tartars by the river marge;
And Rustum and his son were left alone.
  But the majestic river floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasmian waste,
Under the solitary moon;—he flow'd
Right for the polar star, past Orgunjè,
Brimming, and bright, and large; then sands began
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents; that for many a league
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles;
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain-cradle in Pamere,
A foil'd circuitous wanderer—till at last
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bath'd stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

(1853)

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

ALFRED TENNYSON

[This poem deals with an incident in the Battle of Balaclava, in the Crimean War, fought on October 25, 1854. The Russians had begun the conflict by capturing Vorontsov Heights; their cavalry then advanced in large numbers to clear Balaclava plain, which was partly occupied by British cavalry. The charge of the Heavy Brigade (see page 000), under General Scarlett, routed them and compelled them to return to the hill-crest. An order—the result of a misunderstanding — was then brought commanding the Light Brigade to charge the Russian guns; in making the effort the brigade lost over half its horses and over a third of its men.]

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
  Rode the six hundred.
"Forward the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!" he said.
Into the valley of Death
  Rode the six hundred.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
  Some one had blunder'd.
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
  Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
  Volley'd and thunder'd;

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Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of hell
Rode the six hundred.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd.
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not—
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred!

(1854)

INSTANS TYRANNUS

ROBERT BROWNING

[The title means "The Harassing Tyrant." It is he who speaks, narrating an unexpected defeat.]

Of the million or two, more or less,
I rule and possess,
One man, for some cause undefined,
Was least to my mind.

I struck him, he groveled of course—
For what was his force?
I pinned him to earth with my weight
And persistence of hate:
And he lay, would not moan, would not curse,
As his lot might be worse.

"Were the object less mean, would he stand
At the swing of my hand!
For obscurity helps him and blots
The hole where he squats."
So, I set my five wits on the stretch
To inveigle the wretch.
All in vain! Gold and jewels I threw,
Still he couched there perdue;[1]
I tempted his blood and his flesh,
Hid in roses my mesh,[2]
Choicest cates[3] and the flagon's best spilth:[4]
Still he kept to his filth.

Had he kith now or kin, were access
To his heart, did I press:
Just a son or a mother to seize!
No such booty as these.
Were it simply a friend to pursue
'Mid my million or two,
Who could pay me in person or pelf
What he owes me himself!
No: I could not but smile through my chafe:[5]
For the fellow lay safe
As his mates do, the midge and the nit,
—Through minuteness, to wit.

Then a humor more great took its place
At the thought of his face,
The droop, the low cares of the mouth,
The trouble uncouth
'Twixt the brows, all that air one is fain
To put out of its pain.
And "no!" I admonished myself,
"Is one mocked by an elf,
Is one baffled by toad or by rat?
The gravamen's[6] in that!
How the lion, who crouches to suit
His back to my foot,
Would admire[7] that I stand in debate!
But the small turns[8] the great
If it vexes you,—that is the thing!
Toad or rat vex the king?
Though I waste half my realm to unearth
Toad or rat, 'tis well worth!"

[1] *perdue.* In concealment.
[2] *mesh.* Net.
[3] *cates.* Dainties.
[4] *spilth.* Outpourings.
[5] *chafe.* Vexation.
[6] *gravamen.* Chief hardship.
[7] *admire.* Wonder.
[8] *turns.* Becomes.

So I soberly laid my last plan
To extinguish the man.
Round his creep-hole, with never a break,
Ran my fires for his sake;
Over-head did my thunder combine
With my underground mine:
Till I looked from my labor content
To enjoy the event.[1]

When sudden . . . how think ye, the end?
Did I say "without friend"?
Say rather, from marge[2] to blue marge
The whole sky grew his targe,[3]
With the sun's self for visible boss,
While an Arm ran across
Which the earth heaved beneath like a breast
Where the wretch was safe pressed!
Do you see? Just my vengeance complete,
The man sprang to his feet,
Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed!
—So, *I* was afraid!

(1855)

A BALLAD OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN

GEORGE HENRY BOKER

[In May, 1845, Sir John Franklin, British rear-admiral and explorer, set sail with two ships, under orders of the Admiralty, to discover a northwest passage to the Pacific. With provision for three years he left Greenland, and was last seen July 26, 1845, near the western outlet of Baffin Bay. Fourteen years later a private expedition found a record of the voyage of discovery; Franklin had sailed through Lancaster Sound, Barrow Strait, southward through Peel and Franklin Straits, and had almost found M'Clintock Strait, which would have led him through to the Pacific. He died June 11, 1847, and the rest of his party perished while trying to work south by land.]

"O, whither sail you, Sir John Franklin?"
Cried a whaler in Baffin's Bay.
"To know if between the land and the Pole
I may find a broad sea-way."

"I charge you back, Sir John Franklin,
As you would live and thrive;
For between the land and the frozen Pole
No man may sail alive."

But lightly laughed the stout Sir John,
And spoke unto his men:
"Half England is wrong, if he be right;
Bear off to the westward then."

"O whither sail you, brave Englishman?"
Cried the little Esquimau.
"Between your land and the polar star
My goodly vessels go."

"Come down, if you would journey there,"
The little Indian said;
"And change your cloth for fur clothing,
Your vessel for a sled."

But lightly laughed the stout Sir John,
And the crew laughed with him too:
"A sailor to change from ship to sled,
I ween, were something new."

All through the long, long polar day
The vessels westward sped,
And wherever the sail of Sir John was blown,
The ice gave way and fled;—

Gave way with many a hollow groan,
And with many a surly roar,
But it murmured and threatened on every side,
And closed where he sailed before.

"Ho! see ye not, my merry men,
The broad and open sea?
Bethink ye what the whaler said!
Think of the little Indian's sled!"
The crew laughed out in glee.

"Sir John, Sir John, 'tis bitter cold,
The scud[4] drives on the breeze:
The ice comes looming from the North,
The very sunbeams freeze."

"Bright summer goes, dark winter comes,—
We cannot rule the year;
But long ere summer's sun goes down,
On yonder sea we'll steer."

The dripping icebergs dipped and rose,
And floundered down the gale;
The ships were stayed, the yards were manned,
And furled the useless sail.

---

[1] *event.* Outcome.
[2] *marge.* Edge, horizon.
[3] *targe.* Shield.
[4] *scud.* Body of flying clouds.

"The summer's gone, the winter's come,—
We sail not on yonder sea.
Why sail we not, Sir John Franklin?"
A silent man was he.

"The summer goes, the winter comes,—
We cannot rule the year;
I ween we cannot rule the ways,
Sir John, wherein we'd steer."

The cruel ice came floating on,
And closed beneath the lee,
Till the thickening waters dashed no more:
'Twas ice around, behind, before—
My God! there is no sea!

What think you of the whaler now?
What of the Esquimau?
A sled were better than a ship
To cruise through ice and snow.

Down sank the baleful crimson sun,
The northern light came out,
And glared upon the ice-bound ships,
And shook its spears about.

The snow came down, storm breeding storm,
And on the decks was laid,
Till the weary sailor, sick at heart,
Sank down beside his spade.

"Sir John, the night is black and long,
The hissing wind is bleak,
The hard, green ice is strong as death;—
I prithee, Captain, speak!"

"The night is neither bright nor short,
The singing breeze is cold;—
The ice is not so strong as hope;
The heart of man is bold!"

"What hope can scale this icy wall,
High over the main flag-staff?
Above the ridges the wolf and bear
Look down, with a patient, settled stare,
Look down on us and laugh."

"The summer went, the winter came,—
We could not rule the year;
But summer will melt the ice again,
And open a path to the sunny main,
Whereon our ships shall steer."

The winter went, the summer went,
The winter came around;
But the hard, green ice was strong as death,
And the voice of hope sank to a breath,
Yet caught at every sound.

"Hark! heard you not the noise of guns?—
And there, and there, again?"
'Tis some uneasy iceberg's roar,
As he turns in the frozen main.

"Hurra! Hurra! the Esquimaux
Across the ice-fields steal:
God give them grace for their charity!"—
Ye pray for the silly seal.

"Sir John, where are the English fields,
And where are the English trees,
And where are the little English flowers
That open in the breeze?"

"Be still, be still, my brave sailors!
You shall see the fields again,
And smell the scent of the opening flowers,
The grass, and the waving grain."

"Oh! when shall I see my orphan child?
My Mary waits for me."
"Oh! when shall I see my old mother,
And pray at her trembling knee?"

"Be still, be still, my brave sailors!
Think not such thoughts again."
But a tear froze slowly on his cheek:
He thought of Lady Jane.

"Ah! bitter, bitter grows the cold,
The ice grows more and more;
More settled stare the wolf and bear,
More patient than before.

"O think you, good Sir John Franklin,
We'll ever see the land?
'Twas cruel to send us here to starve,
Without a helping hand.

"'Twas cruel, Sir John, to send us here,
So far from help or home,
To starve and freeze on this lonely sea:
I ween the lords of the Admiralty
Would rather send than come."

"Oh! whether we starve to death alone,
Or sail to our own country,
We have done what man has never done—
The truth is found, the secret won—
We passed the Northern Sea!"

(1856)

SKIPPER IRESON'S RIDE

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

[Based on a story of Marblehead which Whittier heard in his boyhood. Its historicity, however, has been denied, and he said that the ballad should be thought of as "pure fancy."]

Of all the rides since the birth of time,
Told in story or sung in rhyme,—
On Apuleius's Golden Ass,[1]
Or one-eyed Calender's horse of brass,
Witch astride of a human back,
Islam's prophet on Al-Borák,—
The strangest ride that ever was sped
Was Ireson's, out from Marblehead!
  Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
  Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
    By the women of Marblehead!

Body of turkey, head of owl,
Wings a-droop like a rained-on fowl,
Feathered and ruffled in every part,
Skipper Ireson stood in the cart.
Scores of women, old and young,
Strong of muscle, and glib of tongue,
Pushed and pulled up the rocky lane,
Shouting and singing the shrill refrain:
  "Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
  Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
    By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Wrinkled scolds with hands on hips,
Girls in bloom of cheek and lips,
Wild-eyed, free-limbed, such as chase
Bacchus round some antique vase,
Brief of skirt, with ankles bare,
Loose of kerchief and loose of hair,
With conch-shells blowing and fish-horns' twang,
Over and over the Mænads[2] sang:
  "Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
  Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
    By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Small pity for him!—He sailed away
From a leaking ship on Chaleur Bay,—[3]
Sailed away from a sinking wreck,
With his own town's-people on her deck!
"Lay by! lay by!" they called to him.
Back he answered, "Sink or swim!
Brag of your catch of fish again!"
And off he sailed through the fog and rain!
  Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
  Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
    By the women of Marblehead!

Fathoms deep in dark Chaleur
That wreck shall lie forevermore.
Mother and sister, wife and maid,
Looked from the rocks of Marblehead
Over the moaning and rainy sea,—
Looked for the coming that might not be!
What did the winds and the sea-birds say
Of the cruel captain who sailed away?—
  Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
  Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
    By the women of Marblehead!

Through the street, on either side,
Up flew windows, doors swung wide;
Sharp-tongued spinsters, old wives gray,
Treble lent the fish-horn's bray.
Sea-worn grandsires, cripple-bound,
Hulks of old sailors run aground,
Shook head, and fist, and hat, and cane,
And cracked with curses the hoarse refrain:
  "Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
  Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
    By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Sweetly along the Salem road
Bloom of orchard and lilac showed.
Little the wicked skipper knew
Of the fields so green and sky so blue.
Riding there in his sorry trim,
Like an Indian idol glum and grim,
Scarcely he seemed the sound to hear
Of voices shouting, far and near:
  "Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
  Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
    By the women o' Morble'ead!"

"Hear me, neighbors!" at last he cried,—
"What to me is this noisy ride?
What is the shame that clothes the skin
To the nameless horror that lives within?

---

[1] The *Golden Ass* of Apuleius was a famous Latin story of the second century. Calender and his horse are from the *Arabian Nights*. Al-Borák was sent by Gabriel to carry Mohammed to the heavens.

[2] *Mænads*. Furies.

[3] *Chaleur Bay*. In the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Waking or sleeping, I see a wreck,
And hear a cry from a reeling deck!
Hate me and curse me,—I only dread
The hand of God and the face of the dead!"
Said old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Then the wife of the skipper lost at sea
Said, "God has touched him! why should we!"
Said an old wife mourning her only son,
"Cut the rogue's tether and let him run!"
So with soft relentings and rude excuse,
Half scorn, half pity, they cut him loose,
And gave him a cloak to hide him in,
And left him alone with his shame and sin.
Poor Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

(1857)

KING SOLOMON

OWEN MEREDITH

(ROBERT, LORD LYTTON)

[Jewish legendry was full of stories connecting King Solomon with magical powers, cabalistic symbols, etc. On one of these legends the present poem is based. The Pentagraph (more properly Pentagram) was a five-pointed design like a star, credited with mystic significance.]

King Solomon stood, in his crown of gold,
Between the pillars, before the altar
In the House of the Lord. And the King was old,
And his strength began to falter,
So that he leaned on his ebony staff,
Sealed with the seal of the Pentagraph.

All of the golden fretted work,
Without and within so rich and rare,
As high as the nest of the building stork,
Those pillars of cedar were,—
Wrought up to the brazen chapiters[1]
Of the Sidonian artificers.

And the King stood still as a carven king,
The carven cedarn beams below,
In his purple robe, with his signet-ring,
And his beard as white as snow,
And his face to the Oracle,[2] where the hymn
Dies under the wing of the cherubim.

The wings fold over the Oracle,
And cover the heart and eyes of God:
The Spouse with pomegranate, lily, and bell,[3]
Is glorious in her abode;
For with gold of Ophir, and scent of myrrh,
And purple of Tyre, the King clothed her.

By the soul of each slumbrous instrument
Drawn soft through the musical misty air,
The stream of folk that came and went,
For worship, and praise, and prayer,
Flowed to and fro, and up and down,
And round the King in his golden crown.

And it came to pass, as the King stood there,
And looked on the house he had built, with pride,
That the Hand of the Lord came unaware,
And touched him; so that he died,
In his purple robe, with his signet-ring,
And the crown wherewith they had crowned him king.

And the stream of the folk that came and went
To worship the Lord with prayer and praise,
Went softly ever, in wonderment,
For the King stood there always;
And it was solemn and strange to behold
The dead king crowned with a crown of gold.

For he leaned on his ebony staff upright;
And over his shoulders the purple robe;
And his hair and his beard were both snow-white,
And the fear of him filled the globe;
So that none dared touch him, though he was dead,
He looked so royal about the head.

---

[1] *chapiters.* Capitals. See *I Kings*, 7: 13-16.

[2] *Oracle.* See *I Kings*, 6: 19-28.

[3] See *Psalm* 45: 8-13; *Exodus*, 28:33; *I Kings*, 7: 18-19.

And the moons were changed; and the years rolled on;
And the new king reigned in the old king's stead;
And men were married and buried anon;
But the King stood, stark and dead,
Leaning upright on his ebony staff,
Preserved by the sign of the Pentagraph.

And the stream of life, as it went and came,
Ever for worship and praise and prayer,
Was awed by the face, and the fear, and the fame
Of the dead king standing there;
For his hair was so white, and his eyes so cold,
That they left him alone with his crown of gold.

So King Solomon stood up, dead, in the House
Of the Lord, held there by the Pentagraph,
Until out from the pillar there ran a red mouse,
And gnawed through his ebony staff;
Then flat on his face the King fell down,
And they picked from the dust a golden crown.

(1857)

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

["The Sicilian's Tale" in *Tales of a Wayside Inn.* The story is a medieval legend found in various forms.]

Robert of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane
And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Appareled in magnificent attire,
With retinue of many a knight and squire,
On St. John's Eve, at vespers, proudly sat
And heard the priests chant the Magnificat.[1]
And as he listened, o'er and o'er again
Repeated, like a burden or refrain,
He caught the words, *Deposuit potentes*
De sede, et exaltavit humiles;
And slowly lifting up his kingly head,
He to a learned clerk beside him said,
"What mean these words?" The clerk made answer meet,
"He has put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted them of low degree."
Thereat King Robert muttered scornfully,
"'Tis well that such seditious words are sung
Only by priests and in the Latin tongue;
For unto priests and people be it known
There is no power can push me from my throne!"
And leaning back, he yawned and fell asleep,
Lulled by the chant monotonous and deep.

When he awoke, it was already night;
The church was empty, and there was no light,
Save where the lamps, that glimmered few and faint,
Lighted a little space before some saint.
He started from his seat and gazed around,
But saw no living thing and heard no sound.
He groped towards the door, but it was locked;
He cried aloud, and listened, and then knocked,
And uttered awful threatenings and complaints,
And imprecations upon men and saints.
The sounds reëchoed from the roof and walls
As if dead priests were laughing in their stalls.

At length the sexton, hearing from without
The tumult of the knocking and the shout,
And thinking thieves were in the house of prayer,
Came with his lantern, asking, "Who is there?"
Half choked with rage, King Robert fiercely said,
"Open: 'tis I, the king! Art thou afraid?"
The frightened sexton, muttering, with a curse,
"This is some drunken vagabond, or worse,"

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[1] *Magnificat.* The hymn from *Luke* 1:46-55.

Turned the great key and flung the portal wide;
A man rushed by him at a single stride,
Haggard, half naked, without hat or cloak,
Who neither turned, nor looked at him, nor spoke,
But leaped into the blackness of the night,
And vanished like a spectre from his sight.

Robert of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane
And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Despoiled of his magnificent attire,
Bareheaded, breathless, and besprent with mire,
With sense of wrong and outrage desperate,
Strode on and thundered at the palace gate;
Rushed through the courtyard, thrusting in his rage
To right and left each seneschal and page,
And hurried up the broad and sounding stair,
His white face ghastly in the torches' glare.
From hall to hall he passed with breathless speed;
Voices and cries he heard, but did not heed,
Until at last he reached the banquet-room,
Blazing with light, and breathing with perfume.
There on the dais sat another king,
Wearing his robes, his crown, his signet-ring,
King Robert's self in features, form, and height,
But all transfigured with angelic light!
It was an Angel; and his presence there
With a divine effulgence filled the air,
An exaltation, piercing the disguise,
Though none the hidden angel recognize.

A moment speechless, motionless, amazed,
The throneless monarch on the Angel gazed,
Who met his look of anger and surprise
With the divine compassion of his eyes;
Then said, "Who art thou? and why com'st thou here?"
To which King Robert answered with a sneer,
"I am the king, and come to claim my own
From an impostor, who usurps my throne!"
And suddenly, at these audacious words,
Up sprang the angry guests, and drew their swords;
The Angel answered, with unruffled brow,
"Nay, not the king, but the king's jester, thou
Henceforth shall wear the bells and scalloped cape,
And for thy counsellor shalt lead an ape;
Thou shalt obey my servants when they call,
And wait upon my henchmen in the hall!"

Deaf to King Robert's threats and cries and prayers,
They thrust him from the hall and down the stairs;
A group of tittering pages ran before,
And as they opened wide the folding-door,
His heart failed, for he heard, with strange alarms,
The boisterous laughter of the men-at-arms,
And all the vaulted chamber roar and ring
With the mock plaudits of "Long live the king!"

Next morning, waking with the day's first beam,
He said within himself, "It was a dream!"
But the straw rustled as he turned his head;
There were the cap and bells beside his bed;
Around him rose the bare, discolored walls;
Close by, the steeds were champing in their stalls,
And in the corner, a revolting shape,
Shivering and chattering, sat the wretched ape.
It was no dream; the world he loved so much
Had turned to dust and ashes at his touch!

Days came and went; and now returned again
To Sicily the old Saturnian reign;[1]
Under the Angel's governance benign
The happy island danced with corn and wine,
And deep within the mountain's burning breast
Enceladus,[2] the giant, was at rest.
Meanwhile King Robert yielded to his fate,
Sullen and silent and disconsolate.
Dressed in the motley garb that jesters wear,
With look bewildered and a vacant stare,
Close shaven along the ears, as monks are shorn,
By courtiers mocked, by pages laughed to scorn,
His only friend the ape, his only food
What others left,—he still was unsubdued.
And when the Angel met him on his way,
And half in earnest, half in jest, would say,
Sternly though tenderly, that he might feel
The velvet scabbard held a sword of steel,
"Art thou the king?" the passion of his woe
Burst from him in resistless overflow,
And, lifting high his forehead, he would fling
The haughty answer back, "I am, I am the king!"

Almost three years were ended; when there came
Ambassadors of great repute and name
From Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Unto King Robert, saying that Pope Urbane
By letter summoned them forthwith to come
On Holy Thursday to his city of Rome.
The Angel with great joy received his guests,
And gave them presents of embroidered vests,
And velvet mantles with rich ermine lined,
And rings and jewels of the rarest kind.
Then he departed with them o'er the sea
Into the lovely land of Italy,
Whose loveliness was more resplendent made
By the mere passing of that cavalcade,
With plumes, and cloaks, and housings, and the stir
Of jeweled bridle and of golden spur.
And lo! among the menials, in mock state,
Upon a piebald steed, with shambling gait,
His cloak of fox-tails flapping in the wind,
The solemn ape demurely perched behind,
King Robert rode, making huge merriment
In all the country towns through which they went.

The Pope received them with great pomp and blare
Of bannered trumpets, on Saint Peter's square,
Giving his benediction and embrace,
Fervent, and full of apostolic grace.
While with congratulations and with prayers
He entertained the Angel unawares,
Robert, the Jester, bursting through the crowd,
Into their presence rushed, and cried aloud,
"I am the king! Look, and behold in me
Robert, your brother, King of Sicily!
This man, who wears my semblance in your eyes,
Is an impostor in a king's disguise.
Do you not know me? does no voice within
Answer my cry, and say we are akin?"
The Pope in silence, but with troubled mien,
Gazed at the Angel's countenance serene;
The Emperor, laughing, said, "It is strange sport
To keep a madman for thy fool at court!"
And the poor, baffled jester in disgrace
Was hustled back among the populace.

In solemn state the Holy Week went by,
And Easter Sunday gleamed upon the sky;

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[1] *Saturnian reign.* Reign of the god Saturn, reputed to be the "golden age" of antiquity.

[2] *Enceladus.* Buried, according to ancient myth, beneath the volcano Ætna.

The presence of the Angel, with its light,
Before the sun rose, made the city bright,
And with new fervor filled the hearts of men,
Who felt that Christ indeed had risen again.
Even the jester, on his bed of straw,
With haggard eyes the unwonted splendor saw;
He felt within a power unfelt before,
And, kneeling humbly on his chamber floor,
He heard the rustling garments of the Lord
Sweep through the silent air, ascending heavenward.

And now the visit ending, and once more
Valmond returning to the Danube's shore,
Homeward the Angel journeyed, and again
The land was made resplendent with his train,
Flashing along the towns of Italy
Unto Salerno, and from thence by sea.
And when once more within Palermo's wall,
And, seated on the throne in his great hall,
He heard the angelus from convent towers,
As if the better world conversed with ours,
He beckoned to King Robert to draw nigher,
And with a gesture bade the rest retire;
And when they were alone, the Angel said,
"Art thou the king?" Then, bowing down his head,
King Robert crossed both hands upon his breast,
And meekly answered him: "Thou knowest best!
My sins as scarlet are; let me go hence,
And in some cloister's school of penitence,
Across those stones that pave the way to heaven
Walk barefoot, till my guilty soul be shriven!"[1]
The Angel smiled, and from his radiant face
A holy light illumined all the place,
And through the open window, loud and clear,
They heard the monks chant in the chapel near,
Above the stir and tumult of the street:
"He has put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted them of low degree."
And through the chant a second melody
Rose like the throbbing of a single string,
"I am an Angel, and thou art the king!"

King Robert, who was standing near the throne,
Lifted his eyes, and lo! he was alone!
But all appareled as in days of old,
With ermined mantle and with cloth of gold;
And when his courtiers came, they found him there
Kneeling upon the floor, absorbed in silent prayer.

(1861)

THE COURTIN'

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

[A ballad in the dialect of rural New England of the early 19th century, supposed to have been written by Hosea Bigelow, the chief character in Lowell's *Bigelow Papers.*]

God makes sech nights, all white an' still
  Fur 'z you can look or listen;
Moonshine an' snow on field an' hill,
  All silence an' all glisten.

Zekle crep' up quite unbeknown
  An' peeked in thru the winder;
An' there sot Huldy all alone,
  'Ith no one nigh to hinder.

A fireplace filled the room's one side
  With half a cord o' wood in—
There warn't no stoves (tell comfort died)
  To bake ye to a puddin'.

The wa'nut logs shot sparkles out
  Towards the pootiest, bless her,
An' leetle flames danced all about
  The chiny on the dresser.

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[1] *shriven.* Confessed (and forgiven).

Agin the chimbley crook-necks[1] hung,
An' in amongst 'em rusted
The ole queen's-arm[2] thet gran'ther Young
Fetched back from Concord busted.

The very room, coz she was in,
Seemed warm from floor to ceilin',
An' she looked full ez rosy agin
Ez the apples she was peelin'.

'Twas kin' o' kingdom-come to look
On sech a blessed cretur;
A dogrose blushin' to a brook
Ain't modester nor sweeter.

He was six foot o' man, A 1,
Clean grit an' human natur';
None couldn't quicker pitch a ton
Nor dror a furrer straighter.

He'd sparked it with full twenty gals,
He'd squired 'em, danced 'em, druv 'em,
Fust this one, an' then thet, by spells—
All is, he couldn't love 'em.

But long o' her his veins 'ould run
All crinkly like curled maple;
The side she breshed felt full o' sun
Ez a south slope in Ap'il.

She thought no v'ice hed sech a swing
Ez hisn in the choir;
My! when he made Ole Hunderd ring,
She *knowed* the Lord was nigher.

An' she'd blush scarlit, right in prayer,
When her new meetin'-bunnet
Felt somehow thru its crown a pair
O' blue eyes sot upon it.

Thet night, I tell ye, she looked some!
She seemed to've gut a new soul,
For she felt sartin-sure he'd come,
Down to her very shoe-sole.

She heered a foot, an' knowed it tu,
A-raspin' on the scraper,—
All ways to once her feelin's flew
Like sparks in burnt-up paper.

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,
Some doubtful o' the sekle;[3]
His heart kep' goin' pity-pat,
But hern went pity-Zekle.

An' yit she gin her cheer a jerk
Ez though she wished him furder,
An' on her apples kep' to work,
Parin' away like murder.

"You want to see my Pa, I s'pose?"
"Wal—no—I come designin' "—
"To see my Ma? She's sprinklin' clo'es
Agin to-morrer's i'nin.' "

To say why gals acts so or so,
Or don't, 'ould be presumin';
Mebby to mean yes an' say no
Comes nateral to women.

He stood a spell on one foot fust,
Then stood a spell on t'other,
An' on which one he felt the wust
He couldn't ha' told ye nuther.

Says he, "I'd better call agin";
Says she, "Think likely, Mister"—
Thet last word pricked him like a pin,
An'—wal, he up an' kist her.

When Ma bimeby upon 'em slips,
Huldy sot pale ez ashes,
All kin' o' smily roun' the lips
An' teary roun' the lashes.

Fur she was jes' the quiet kind
Whose naturs never vary,
Like streams that keep a summer mind
Snow-hid in Jenooary.

The blood clost roun' her heart felt glued
Too tight for all expressin',
Tell mother see how matters stood
An' gin 'em both her blessin'.

Then her red come back like the tide
Down to the Bay o' Fundy;
An' all I know is they was cried[4]
In meetin' come nex' Sunday.

(1866)

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[1] *crook-necks.* Squashes.
[2] *queen's-arm.* Musket.
[3] *sekle.* Sequel.
[4] *they was cried.* Their marriage-bans were announced.

THE LADY OF THE LAND

WILLIAM MORRIS

A certain man, having landed on an island in the Greek Sea, found there a beautiful damsel, whom he would fain have delivered from a strange and dreadful doom, but failing herein, he died soon afterwards.

It happened once, some men of Italy
Midst the Greek Islands went a sea-roving,
And much good fortune had they on the sea:
Of many a man they had the ransoming,
And many a chain they gat, and goodly thing;
And midst their voyage to an isle they came,
Whereof my story keepeth not the name.

Now though but little was there left to gain,
Because the richer folk had gone away,
Yet since by this of water they were fain[1]
They came to anchor in a land-locked bay,
Whence in a while some went ashore to play,
Going but lightly armed in twos or threes,
For midst that folk they feared no enemies.

And of these fellows that thus went ashore,
One was there who left all his friends behind;
Who going inland ever more and more,
And being left quite alone, at last did find
A lonely valley sheltered from the wind,
Wherein, amidst an ancient cypress wood,
A long-deserted ruined castle stood.

The wood, once ordered in fair grove and glade,
With gardens overlooked by terraces,
And marble-pavèd pools for pleasure made,
Was tangled now, and choked with fallen trees;
And he who went there, with but little ease
Must stumble by the stream's side, once made meet
For tender women's dainty wandering feet.

The raven's croak, the low wind choked and drear,
The baffled stream, the gray wolf's doleful cry,
Were all the sounds that mariner could hear,
And through the wood he wandered painfully;
But as unto the house he drew anigh,
The pillars of a ruined shrine he saw,
The once fair temple of a fallen law.[2]

No image was there left behind to tell
Before whose face the knees of men had bowed;
An altar of black stone, of old wrought well,
Alone beneath a ruined roof now showed
The goal whereto the folk were wont to crowd,
Seeking for things forgotten long ago,
Praying for heads long ages laid a-low.

Close to the temple was the castle-gate;
Doorless and crumbling; there our fellow turned,
Trembling indeed at what might chance to wait
The prey entrapped, yet with a heart that burned
To know the most of what might there be learned,
And hoping somewhat too, amid his fear,
To light on such things as all men hold dear.

Noble the house was, nor seemed built for war,
But rather like the work of other days,
When men, in better peace than now they are,
Had leisure on the world around to gaze,
And noted well the past times' changing ways;
And fair with sculptured stories it was wrought,
By lapse of time unto dim ruin brought.

Now as he looked about on all these things,
And strove to read the moldering histories,
Above the door an image with wide wings,
Whose unclad limbs a serpent seemed to seize,
He dimly saw, although the western breeze,

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[1] *fain.* Desirous.

[2] *law.* Religion.

And years of biting frost and washing rain,
Had made the carver's labor well-nigh vain.

But this, though perished sore, and worn away,
He noted well, because it seemed to be,
After the fashion of another day,
Some great man's badge of war, or armory;
And round it a carved wreath he seemed to see:
But taking note of these things, at the last
The mariner beneath the gateway passed.

And there a lovely cloistered court he found,
A fountain in the midst o'erthrown and dry,
And in the cloister briers twining round
The slender shafts; the wondrous imagery
Outworn by more than many years gone by;
Because the country people, in their fear
Of wizardry, had wrought destruction here;

And piteously these fair things had been maimed;
There stood great Jove, lacking his head of might;
Here was the archer, swift Apollo, lamed;
The shapely limbs of Venus hid from sight
By weeds and shards;[1] Diana's ankles light
Bound with the cable of some coasting ship;
And rusty nails through Helen's maddening lip.

Therefrom unto the chambers did he pass,
And found them fair still, midst of their decay,
Though in them now no sign of man there was,
And everything but stone had passed away
That made them lovely in that vanished day;
Nay, the mere walls themselves would soon be gone,
And naught be left but heaps of moldering stone.

But he, when all the place he had gone o'er,
And with much trouble clomb the broken stair,
And from the topmost turret seen the shore
And his good ship drawn up at anchor there,
Came down again, and found a crypt most fair
Built wonderfully beneath the greatest hall,
And there he saw a door within the wall,

Well-hinged, close shut; nor was there in that place
Another on its hinges; therefore he
Stood there and pondered for a little space,
And thought, "Perchance some marvel I shall see,
For surely here some dweller there must be,
Because this door seems whole, and new, and sound,
While naught but ruin I can see around."

So with that word, moved by a strong desire,
He tried the hasp, that yielded to his hand,
And in a strange place, lit as by a fire
Unseen but near, he presently did stand;
And by an odorous breeze his face was fanned,
As though in some Arabian plain he stood,
Anigh the border of a spice-tree wood.

He moved not for awhile, but looking round,
He wondered much to see the place so fair,
Because, unlike the castle above ground,
No pillager or wrecker had been there;
It seemed that time had passed on otherwhere,
Nor laid a finger on this hidden place,
Rich with the wealth of some forgotten race.

With hangings, fresh as when they left the loom,
The walls were hung a space above the head;
Slim ivory chairs were set about the room,
And in one corner was a dainty bed,

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[1] *shards.* Fragments.

That seemed for some fair queen apparelèd;
And marble was the worst stone of the floor,
That with rich Indian webs was covered o'er.

The wanderer trembled when he saw all this,
Because he deemed by magic it was wrought;
Yet in his heart a longing for some bliss,
Whereof the hard and changing world knows naught,
Arose and urged him on, and dimmed the thought
That there perchance some devil lurked to slay
The heedless wanderer from the light of day.

Over against him was another door
Set in the wall; so, casting fear aside,
With hurried steps he crossed the varied floor,
And there again the silver latch he tried
And with no pain the door he opened wide,
And entering the new chamber cautiously
The glory of great heaps of gold could see.

Upon the floor uncounted medals lay,
Like things of little value; here and there
Stood golden caldrons, that might well outweigh
The biggest midst an emperor's copper-ware,
And golden cups were set on tables fair,
Themselves of gold; and in all hollow things
Were stored great gems, worthy the crowns of kings.

The walls and roof with gold were overlaid,
And precious raiment from the wall hung down;
The fall of kings that treasure might have stayed,
Or gained some longing conqueror great renown,
Or built again some god-destroyed old town;
What wonder, if this plunderer of the sea
Stood gazing at it long and dizzily?

But at the last his troubled eyes and dazed
He lifted from the glory of that gold,
And then the image, that well-nigh erased
Over the castle-gate he did behold,
Above a door well wrought in colored gold
Again he saw; a naked girl with wings
Enfolded in a serpent's scaly rings.

And even as his eyes were fixed on it
A woman's voice came from the other side,
And through his heart strange hopes began to flit
That in some wondrous land he might abide
Not dying, master of a deathless bride.
So o'er the gold he scarcely now could see
He went, and passed this last door eagerly.

Then in a room he stood wherein there was
A marble bath, whose brimming water yet
Was scarcely still; a vessel of green glass
Half full of odorous ointment was there set
Upon the topmost step that still was wet,
And jeweled shoes and women's dainty gear[1]
Lay cast upon the varied pavement near.

In one quick glance these things his eyes did see,
But speedily they turned round to behold
Another sight, for throned on ivory
There sat a girl, whose dripping tresses rolled
On to the floor in waves of gleaming gold,
Cast back from such a form as, erewhile shown
To one poor shepherd, lighted up Troy town.[2]

Naked she was, the kisses of her feet
Upon the floor a dying path had made
From the full bath into her ivory seat;
In her right hand, upon her bosom laid,
She held a golden comb, a mirror weighed

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[1] *gear.* Clothing.

[2] That is, the beauty of Helen, which caused the Trojan war.

Her left hand down, aback her fair head lay
Dreaming awake of some long vanished day.

Her eyes were shut, but she seemed not to sleep,
Her lips were murmuring things unheard and low,
Or sometimes twitched as though she needs must weep,
Though from her eyes the tears refused to flow,
And oft with heavenly red her cheek did glow,
As if remembrance of some half-sweet shame
Across the web of many memories came.

There stood the man, scarce daring to draw breath
For fear the lovely sight should fade away;
Forgetting heaven, forgetting life and death,
Trembling for fear lest something he should say
Unwitting, lest some sob should yet betray
His presence there, for to his eager eyes
Already did the tears begin to rise.

But as he gazed, she moved, and with a sigh
Bent forward, dropping down her golden head;
"Alas, alas! another day gone by,
Another day and no soul come," she said;
"Another year, and still I am not dead!"
And with that word once more her head she raised,
And on the trembling man with great eyes gazed.

Then he imploring hands to her did reach,
And toward her very slowly 'gan to move
And with wet eyes her pity did beseech,
And, seeing her about to speak, he strove
From trembling lips to utter words of love;
But with a look she stayed his doubtful feet,
And made sweet music as their eyes did meet.

For now she spoke in gentle voice and clear,
Using the Greek tongue that he knew full well;
"What man art thou, that thus hast wandered here.
And found this lonely chamber where I dwell?
Beware, beware! for I have many a spell;
If greed of power and gold have led thee on,
Not lightly shall this untold wealth be won.

"But if thou com'st here, knowing of my tale,
In hope to bear away my body fair,
Stout must thine heart be, nor shall that avail
If thou a wicked soul in thee dost bear;
So once again I bid thee to beware,
Because no base man things like this may see,
And live thereafter long and happily."

"Lady," he said, "in Florence is my home,
And in my city noble is my name;
Neither on peddling voyage am I come,
But, like my fathers, bent to gather fame;
And though thy face has set my heart aflame
Yet of thy story nothing do I know,
But here have wandered heedlessly enow.

"But since the sight of thee my eyes did bless,
What can I be but thine? what wouldst thou have?
From those thy words, I deem from some distress
By deeds of mine thy dear life I might save;
O then, delay not! if one ever gave
His life to any, mine I give to thee;
Come, tell me what the price of love must be?

"Swift death, to be with thee a day and night
And with the earliest dawning to be slain?
Or better, a long year of great delight,
And many years of misery and pain?
Or worse, and this poor hour for all my gain?
A sorry merchant am I on this day,
E'en as thou willest so must I obey."

She said, "What brave words! naught divine am I,
But an unhappy and unheard-of maid
Compelled by evil fate and destiny
To live, who long ago should have been laid
Under the earth within the cypress shade.
Hearken awhile, and quickly shalt thou know
What deed I pray thee to accomplish now.

"God grant indeed thy words are not for naught!
Then shalt thou save me, since for many a day
To such a dreadful life I have been brought:
Nor will I spare with all my heart to pay
What man soever takes my grief away;
Ah! I will love thee, if thou lovest me
But well enough my savior now to be.

"My father lived a many years agone
Lord of this land, master of all cunning,[1]
Who ruddy gold could draw from out gray stone,
And gather wealth from many an uncouth[2] thing;
He made the wilderness rejoice and sing,
And such a leech[3] he was that none could say
Without his word what soul should pass away.

"Unto Diana such a gift he gave,
Goddess above, below, and on the earth,
That I should be her virgin and her slave
From the first hour of my most wretched birth;
Therefore my life had known but little mirth
When I had come unto my twentieth year
And the last time of hallowing drew anear.

"So in her temple had I lived and died
And all would long ago have passed away,
But ere that time came, did strange things betide,
Whereby I am alive unto this day;
Alas, the bitter words that I must say!
Ah! can I bring my wretched tongue to tell
How I was brought unto this fearful hell?

"A queen I was, what gods I knew I loved,
And nothing evil was there in my thought,
And yet by love my wretched heart was moved
Until to utter ruin I was brought!
Alas! thou sayest our gods were vain and naught;
Wait, wait, till thou hast heard this tale of mine,
Then shalt thou think them devilish or divine.

"Hearken! in spite of father and of vow
I loved a man; but for that sin I think
Men had[4] forgiven me—yea, yea, even thou;
But from the gods the full cup must I drink,
And into misery unheard-of sink,
Tormented, when their own names are forgot,
And men must doubt if they e'er lived or not.

"Glorious my lover was unto my sight,
Most beautiful,—of love we grew so fain
That we at least agreed, that on a night
We should be happy, but that[5] he were slain
Or shut in hold; and neither joy nor pain
Should else forbid that hoped-for time to be;
So came the night that made a wretch of me.

"Ah! well do I remember all that night,
When through the window shone the orb of June,
And by the bed flickered the taper's light,
Whereby I trembled, gazing at the moon:
Ah me! the meeting that we had, when soon
Into his strong, well-trusted arms I fell,
And many a sorrow we began to tell.

"Ah me! what parting on that night we had!
I think the story of my great despair
A little while might merry folk make sad;
For, as he swept away my yellow hair
To make my shoulder and my bosom bare,
I raised mine eyes, and shuddering could behold
A shadow cast upon the bed of gold:

---

[1] *cunning.* Knowledge (here accented on the second syllable).
[2] *uncouth.* Strange.
[3] *leech.* Physician.
[4] *had.* Would have.
[5] *but that.* Unless.

"Then suddenly was quenched my hot desire
And he untwined his arms; the moon so pale
A while ago, seemed changed to blood and fire,
And yet my limbs beneath me did not fail,
And neither had I strength to cry or wail,
But stood there helpless, bare, and shivering,
With staring eyes still fixed upon the thing.

"Because the shade that on the bed of gold
The changed and dreadful moon was throwing down
Was of Diana, whom I did behold,
With knotted hair, and shining girt-up gown,
And on the high white brow, a deadly frown
Bent upon us, who stood scarce drawing breath,
Striving to meet the horrible sure death.

"No word at all the dreadful goddess said,
But soon across my feet my lover lay,
And well indeed I knew that he was dead;
And would that I had died on that same day!
For in a while the image turned away,
And without words my doom I understood,
And felt a horror change my human blood.

"And there I fell, and on the floor I lay
By the dead man, till daylight came on me,
And not a word thenceforward could I say
For three years; till of grief and misery,
The lingering pest, the cruel enemy,
My father and his folk were dead and gone,
And in this castle I was left alone:

"And then the doom foreseen upon me fell,
For Queen Diana did my body change
Into a fork-tongued dragon, flesh and fell,[1]
And through the island nightly do I range,
Or in the green sea mate with monsters strange,
When in the middle of the moonlit night
The sleepy mariner I do affright.

"But all day long upon this gold I lie
Within this place, where never mason's hand
Smote trowel on the marble noisily;
Drowsy I lie, no folk at my command,
Who once was called the Lady of the Land;
Who might have bought a kingdom with a kiss,
Yea, half the world with such a sight as this."

And therewithal, with rosy fingers light,
Backward her heavy-hanging hair she threw,
To give her naked beauty more to sight;
But when, forgetting all the things he knew,
Maddened with love unto the prize he drew,
She cried, "Nay, wait! for wherefore wilt thou die,
Why should we not be happy, thou and I?

"Wilt thou not save me? once in every year
This rightful form of mine that thou dost see
By favor of the goddess have I here
From sunrise unto sunset given me,
That some brave man may end my misery.
And thou—art thou not brave? can thy heart fail,
Whose eyes e'en now are weeping at my tale?

"Then listen! when this day is overpast,
A fearful monster shall I be again,
And thou may'st be my savior at the last;
Unless, once more, thy words are naught and vain.
If thou of love and sovereignty art fain,
Come thou next morn, and when thou seest here
A hideous dragon, have thereof no fear,

---

[1] *fell.* Skin.

"But take the loathsome head up in thine hands,
And kiss it, and be master presently
Of twice the wealth that is in all the lands
From Cathay[1] to the head of Italy;
And master also, if it pleaseth thee,
Of all thou praisest as so fresh and bright,
Of what thou callest crown of all delight.

"Ah! with what joy then shall I see again
The sunlight on the green grass and the trees,
And hear the clatter of the summer rain,
And see the joyous folks beyond the seas.
Ah, me! to hold my child upon my knees,
After the weeping of unkindly tears,
And all the wrongs of these four hundred years.

"Go now, go quick! leave this gray heap of stone;
And from thy glad heart think upon thy way,
How I shall love thee—yea, love thee alone,
That bringest me from dark death unto day;
For this shall be thy wages and thy pay;
Unheard-of wealth, unheard-of love is near,
If thou hast heart a little dread to bear." . . .

Then at the doorway where her rosy heel
Had glanced and vanished, he awhile did stare,
And still upon his hand he seemed to feel
The varying kisses of her fingers fair;
Then turned he toward the dreary crypt and bare,
And dizzily throughout the castle passed,
Till by the ruined fane[2] he stood at last.

Then weighing still the gem within his hand,
He stumbled backward through the cypress wood,
Thinking the while of some strange lovely land,
Where all his life should be most fair and good
Till on the valley's wall of hills he stood,
And slowly thence passed down unto the bay
Red with the death of that bewildering day.

The next day came, and he, who all the night
Had ceaselessly been turning in his bed,
Arose and clad himself in armor bright,
And many a danger he rememberèd;
Storming of towns, long sieges full of dread,
That with renown his heart had borne him through,
And this thing seemed a little thing to do.

So on he went, and on the way he thought
Of all the glorious things of yesterday,
Naught of the price whereat they must be bought,
But ever to himself did softly say,
"No roaming now, my wars are passed away;
No long dull days devoid of happiness,
When such a love my yearning heart shall bless."

Thus to the castle did he come at last,
But when unto the gateway he drew near,
And underneath its ruined archway passed
Into the court, a strange noise did he hear,
And through his heart there shot a pang of fear;
Trembling, he gat his sword into his hand,
And midmost of the cloisters took his stand.

But for a while that unknown noise increased,
A rattling, that with strident roars did blend,
And whining moans; but suddenly it ceased,—
A fearful thing stood at the cloister's end,
And eyed him for a while, then 'gan to wend
Adown the cloisters, and began again
That rattling, and the moan like fiends in pain.

---

[1] *Cathay.* Asia.
[2] *fane.* Temple.

And as it came on towards him, with its teeth
The body of a slain goat did it tear,
The blood whereof in its hot jaws did seethe,
And on its tongue he saw the smoking hair;
Then his heart sank, and standing trembling there,
Throughout his mind wild thoughts and fearful ran,
"Some fiend she was," he said, "the bane[1] of man."

Yet he abode her still, although his blood
Curdled within him: the thing dropped the goat,
And creeping on, came close to where he stood,
And raised its head to him, and wrinkled throat;
Then he cried out and wildly at her smote,
Shutting his eyes, and turned, and from the place
Ran swiftly, with a white and ghastly face.

But little things rough stones and tree-trunks seemed,
And if he fell, he rose and ran on still;
No more he felt his hurts than if he dreamed,
He made no stay for valley or steep hill,
Heedless he dashed through many a foaming rill,
Until he came unto the ship at last
And with no word into the deep hold passed.

Meanwhile the dragon, seeing him clean gone,
Followed him not, but crying horribly,
Caught up within her jaws a block of stone
And ground it into powder, then turned she,
With cries that folk could hear far out at sea,
And reached the treasure set apart of old,
To brood above the hidden heaps of gold.

Yet was she seen again on many a day
By some half-waking mariner, or heard,
Playing amid the ripples of the bay,
Or on the hills, making all things afeard,
Or in the wood that did that castle gird;
But never any man again durst go
To seek her woman's form, and end her woe.

As for the man, who knows what things he bore?
What mournful faces peopled the sad night,
What wailings vexed him with reproaches sore,
What images of that nigh-gained delight!
What dreamed caresses from soft hands and white,
Turning to horrors ere they reached the best;
What struggles vain, what shame, what huge unrest?

No man he knew, three days he lay and raved,
And cried for death, until a lethargy
Fell on him, and his fellows thought him saved;
But on the third night he awoke to die;
And at Byzantium doth his body lie
Between two blossoming pomegranate trees,
Within the churchyard of the Genoese.

(1868)

GARETH AND LYNETTE

ALFRED TENNYSON

[Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, from which this and the two following poems are taken, tell the story of King Arthur, whom medieval romance celebrates as the hero-king of early Britain. Throughout the poems there is a blending of ordinary traditional story with mystical, miraculous elements, and these elements Tennyson used to symbolize moral and spiritual truths. Thus Arthur is, in one aspect of the story, a normal human king, the son of Uther Pendragon, and in another aspect a person of miraculous birth, come to set up a kingdom of purity and righteousness in Britain, especially through the agency of the ideal knights of the Round Table. The opposition to him on the part of the heathen and of all evil men, Tennyson explains as symbolic of "sense at war with soul,"—"sense" meaning the low desires of the animal or "beast" element in man. The present poem is an episode representative of the brightest days of the Arthurian reign, and Gareth is typical of youth winning its spurs of knighthood. In particular, the struggle against the evil knights of Morning, Noon, and Evening (see lines 619 and 1174) symbolizes the overcoming of the temptations of youth, middle life, and old age.]

The last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful spring
Stared at the spate.[1] A slender-shafted pine
Lost footing, fell, and so was whirled away.

---

[1] *bane*. Destroyer.

[1] *spate*. Swollen river.

"How he went down," said Gareth, "as a false knight
Or evil king before my lance, if lance
Were mine to use—O senseless cataract,
Bearing all down in thy precipitancy—
And yet thou art but swollen with cold snows
And mine is living blood: thou dost His will,
The Maker's, and not knowest, and I that know,
Have strength and wit, in my good mother's hall
Linger with vacillating obedience,
Prisoned, and kept and coaxed and whistled to—
Since the good mother holds me still a child!
Good mother is bad mother unto me!
A worse were better; yet no worse would I.
Heaven yield [1] her for it, but in me put force
To weary her ears with one continuous prayer,
Until she let me fly discaged to sweep
In ever-highering eagle-circles up
To the great Sun of Glory, and thence swoop
Down upon all things base, and dash them dead,
A knight of Arthur, working out his will,
To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain, when he came
With Modred hither in the summertime,[2]
Asked me to tilt with him, the proven knight.
Modred, for want of worthier, was the judge.
Then I so shook him in the saddle, he said,
"Thou hast half prevail'd against me," said so—he—
Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was mute,
For he is always sullen: what care I?"

And Gareth went, and hovering round her chair
Asked, "Mother, tho' ye count me still the child,
Sweet mother, do ye love the child?" She laughed,
"Thou art but a wild-goose to question it."

"Then, mother, an[3] ye love the child," he said,
"Being a goose and rather tame than wild,
Hear the child's story." "Yea, my well-beloved,
An 'twere but of the goose and golden eggs."

And Gareth answered her with kindling eyes,
"Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of mine
Was finer gold than any goose can lay;
For this an Eagle, a royal Eagle, laid
Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a palm
As glitters gilded in thy Book of Hours.[4]
And there was ever haunting round the palm
A lusty youth, but poor, who often saw
The splendor sparkling from aloft, and thought
'An I could climb and lay my hand upon it,
Then were I wealthier than a leash [5] of kings.'
But ever when he reached a hand to climb,
One, that had loved him from his childhood, caught
And stayed him, 'Climb not lest thou break thy neck,
I charge thee by my love,' and so the boy,
Sweet mother, neither clomb, nor brake his neck,
But brake his very heart in pining for it,
And passed away."

To whom the mother said,
"True love, sweet son, had risked himself and climbed,
And handed down the golden treasure to him."

And Gareth answered her with kindling eyes,
"Gold? said I gold?—ay then, why he, or she,
Or whosoe'er it was, or half the world
Had ventured—*had* the thing I spake of been
Mere gold—but this was all of that true steel,

---

[1] *yield.* Reward.
[2] Gawain and Modred were brothers of Gareth.
[3] *an.* If.
[4] *Book of Hours.* A prayer-book (often beautifully illuminated).
[5] *leash of.* Three (from "a leash of hounds").

Whereof they forged the brand[1] Excalibur,
And lightnings played about it in the storm,
And all the little fowl were flurried at it,
And there were cries and clashings in the nest,
That sent him from his senses:—let me go."
  Then Bellicent bemoaned herself and said,
"Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness?
Lo, where thy father Lot beside the hearth
Lies like a log, and all but smouldered out!
For ever since when traitor to the King
He fought against him in the Barons' war,
And Arthur gave him back his territory,
His age hath slowly drooped, and now lies there
A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburiable,
No more; nor sees, nor hears, nor speaks, nor knows.
And both thy brethren are in Arthur's hall,
Albeit neither loved with that full love
I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love:
Stay therefore thou; red berries charm the bird,
And thee, mine innocent, the jousts, the wars,
Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang
Of wrenched or broken limb—an often chance
In those brain-stunning shocks, and tourney-falls,
Frights to my heart; but stay: follow the deer
By these tall firs and our fast-falling burns;[2]
So make thy manhood mightier day by day;
Sweet is the chase: and I will seek thee out
Some comfortable bride and fair, to grace
Thy climbing life, and cherish my prone[3] year,
Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness
I know not thee, myself, nor anything.
Stay, my best son! ye are yet more boy than man."
  Then Gareth, "An ye hold me yet for child,
Hear yet once more the story of the child.
For, mother, there was once a King, like ours,
The prince his heir, when tall and marriageable,
Asked for a bride; and thereupon the King
Set two before him. One was fair, strong, armed—
But to be won by force—and many men
Desired her; one, good lack, no man desired.
And these were the conditions of the King:
That save he won the first by force, he needs
Must wed that other, whom no man desired,
A red-faced bride who knew herself so vile,
That evermore she longed to hide herself,
Nor fronted man or woman, eye to eye—
Yea—some she cleaved to, but they died of her.
And one—they called her Fame—and one—O Mother,
How can ye keep me tethered to you—Shame.
Man am I grown, a man's work must I do.
Follow the deer? follow the Christ, the King,
Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King—
Else, wherefore born?"

          To whom the mother said,
"Sweet son, for there be many who deem him not,
Or will not deem him, wholly proven King—
Albeit in mine own heart I knew him King,
When I was frequent, with him in my youth,
And heard him Kingly speak, and doubted him
No more than he, himself; but felt him mine,
Of closest kin to me: yet—wilt thou leave
Thine easeful biding here, and risk thine all,
Life, limbs, for one that is not proven King?

---

[1] *brand.* Sword.
[2] *burns.* Brooks.
[3] *prone.* Falling.

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Stay, till the cloud that settles round his birth
Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet son."

And Gareth answered quickly, "Not an hour,
So that ye yield me—I will walk thro' fire,
Mother, to gain it—your full leave to go.
Not proven, who swept the dust of ruined Rome
From off the threshold of the realm, and crushed
The Idolaters, and made the people free?
Who should be King save him who makes us free?"

So when the Queen, who long had sought in vain
To break him from the intent to which he grew,
Found her son's will unwaveringly one,
She answered craftily, "Will ye walk thro' fire?
Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed the smoke.
Ay, go then, an ye must: only one proof,
Before thou ask the King to make thee knight,
Of thine obedience and thy love to me,
Thy mother,—I demand."

And Gareth cried,
"A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.
Nay—quick! the proof to prove me to the quick!"

But slowly spake the mother, looking at him,
"Prince, thou shalt go disguised to Arthur's hall,
And hire thyself to serve for meats and drinks
Among the scullions and the kitchen-knaves,
And those that hand the dish across the bar.[1]
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to any one.
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and a day."

For so the Queen believed that when her son
Beheld his only way to glory lead
Low down thro' villain[2] kitchen-vassalage,
Her own true Gareth was too princely-proud
To pass thereby; so should he rest with her,
Closed in her castle from the sound of arms.

Silent awhile was Gareth, then replied,
"The thrall in person may be free in soul.
And I shall see the jousts. Thy son am I,
And since thou art my mother, must obey.
I therefore yield me freely to thy will;
For hence will I, disguised, and hire myself
To serve with scullions and with kitchen-knaves;
Nor tell my name to any—no, not the King."

Gareth awhile lingered. The mother's eye,
Full of the wistful fear that he would go,
And turning toward him whereso'er he turned,
Perplexed his outward purpose, till an hour,
When, wakened by the wind which with full voice
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on to dawn,
He rose, and out of slumber calling two
That still[3] had tended on him from his birth,
Before the wakeful mother heard him, went.

The three were clad like tillers of the soil.
Southward they set their faces. The birds made
Melody on branch, and melody in mid air.
The damp hill-slopes were quickened into green,
And the live green had kindled into flowers,
For it was past the time of Easterday.

So, when their feet were planted on the plain
That broadened toward the base of Camelot,
Far off they saw the silver-misty morn
Rolling her smoke about the Royal mount,
That rose between the forest and the field.

---

[1] *bar.* Kitchen counter.
[2] *villain.* Low-born.
[3] *still.* Always.

At times the summit of the high city flashed;
At times the spires and turrets half-way down
Pricked thro' the mist; at times the great gate shone
Only, that opened on the field below:
Anon, the whole fair city had disappeared.

Then those who went with Gareth were amazed,
One crying, "Let us go no further, lord.
Here is a city of Enchanters, built
By fairy Kings." The second echoed him,
"Lord, we have heard from our wise man at home
To Northward, that this King is not the King,
But only changeling out of Fairyland,
Who drave the heathen hence by sorcery
And Merlin's glamour." Then the first again,
"Lord, there is no such city anywhere,
But all a vision."

Gareth answered them
With laughter, swearing he had glamour enow
In his own blood, his princedom, youth and hopes,
To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian sea;
So pushed them all unwilling toward the gate.
And there was no gate like it under heaven.
For barefoot on the keystone, which was lined
And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,
The Lady of the Lake stood: all her dress
Wept from her sides as water flowing away;
But like the cross her great and goodly arms
Stretched under all the cornice and upheld:
And drops of water fell from either hand;
And down from one a sword was hung, from one
A censer, either worn with wind and storm;
And o'er her breast floated the sacred fish;
And in the space to left of her, and right,
Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,
New things and old co-twisted, as if Time
Were nothing, so inveterately,[1] that men
Were giddy gazing there; and over all
High on the top were those three Queens, the friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need.

Then those with Gareth for so long a space
Stared at the figures, that at last it seemed
The dragon-boughts[2] and elvish emblemings
Began to move, seethe, twine, and curl: they called
To Gareth, "Lord, the gateway is alive."

And Gareth likewise on them fixed his eyes
So long, that ev'n to him they seemed to move.
Out of the city a blast of music pealed.
Back from the gate started the three, to whom
From out thereunder came an ancient man,[3]
Long-bearded, saying, "Who be ye, my sons?"

Then Gareth, "We be tillers of the soil,
Who leaving share in furrow come to see
The glories of our King: but these, my men,
(Your city moved so weirdly in the mist)
Doubt if the King be King at all, or come
From Fairyland; and whether this be built
By magic, and by fairy Kings and Queens;
Or whether there be any city at all,
Or all a vision: and this music now
Hath scared them both; but tell thou these the truth."

Then that old Seer made answer playing on him
And saying, "Son, I have seen the good ship sail
Keel upward, and mast downward, in the heavens,
And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air:
And here is truth; but an it please thee not,

---

[1] *inveterately.* Endlessly.
[2] *boughts.* Bends (of the tails).
[3] Evidently the magician Merlin.

Take thou the truth as thou hast told it me.
For truly, as thou sayest, a Fairy King
And Fairy Queens have built the city, son;
They came from out a sacred mountain-cleft
Toward the sunrise, each with harp in hand,
And built it to the music of their harps.
And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted, son,
For there is nothing in it as it seems
Saving the King; tho' some there be that hold
The King a shadow, and the city real:
Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou pass
Beneath this archway, then wilt thou become
A thrall to his enchantments, for the King
Will bind thee by such vows, as is a shame
A man should not be bound by, yet the which
No man can keep; but, so thou dread to swear,
Pass not beneath this gateway, but abide
Without, among the cattle of the field.
For an ye heard a music, like enow
They are building still, seeing the city is built
To music, therefore never built at all,
And therefore built for ever."

Gareth spake
Angered, "Old master, reverence thine own beard
That looks as white as utter truth, and seems
Wellnigh as long as thou art statured tall!
Why mockest thou the stranger that hath been
To thee fair-spoken?"

But the Seer replied,
"Know ye not then the Riddling of the Bards?
'Confusion, and illusion, and relation,
Elusion, and occasion, and evasion'?
I mock thee not but as thou mockest me,
And all that see thee, for thou art not who
Thou seemest, but I know thee who thou art.
And now thou goest up to mock the King,
Who cannot brook[1] the shadow of any lie."

Unmockingly the mocker, ending here,
Turned to the right, and passed along the plain;
Whom Gareth looking after said, "My men,
Our one white lie sits like a little ghost
Here on the threshold of our enterprise.
Let love be blamed for it, not she, nor I:
Well, we will make amends."

With all good cheer
He spake and laughed, then entered with his twain
Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
And stately, rich in emblem and the work
Of ancient kings who did their days in stone;
Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at Arthur's court,
Knowing all arts, had touched, and everywhere
At Arthur's ordinance, tipped with lessening peak
And pinnacle, and had made it spire to heaven.
And ever and anon a knight would pass
Outward, or inward to the hall: his arms
Clashed; and the sound was good to Gareth's ear.
And out of bower and casement shyly glanced
Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars of love;
And all about a healthful people stepped
As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending heard
A voice, the voice of Arthur, and beheld
Far over heads in that long-vaulted hall
The splendor of the presence of the King
Throned, and delivering doom[2] — and looked no more—
But felt his young heart hammering in his ears,
And thought: "For this half-shadow of a lie
The truthful King will doom me when I speak."
Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find
Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one
Nor other, but in all the listening eyes

---

[1] *brook.* Endure.
[2] *doom.* Judgment.

Of those tall knights, that ranged about the throne,
Clear honor shining like the dewy star
Of dawn, and faith in their great King, with pure
Affection, and the light of victory,
And glory gained, and evermore to gain.

Then came a widow crying to the King,
"A boon, Sir King! Thy father, Uther, reft
From my dead lord a field with violence:
For howsoe'er at first he proffered gold,
Yet, for the field was pleasant in our eyes,
We yielded not; and then he reft us of it
Perforce, and left us neither gold nor field."

Said Arthur, "Whether[1] would ye? gold or field?"
To whom the woman weeping, "Nay, my lord,
The field was pleasant in my husband's eye."

And Arthur: "Have thy pleasant field again,
And thrice the gold for Uther's use thereof,
According to the years. No boon is here,
But justice, so they say be proven true.
Accursed, who from the wrongs his father did
Would shape himself a right!"

And while she passed,
Came yet another widow crying to him,
"A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy, King, am I.
With thine own hand thou slewest my dear lord,
A knight of Uther in the Barons' war,
When Lot and many another rose and fought
Against thee, saying thou wert basely born.
I held with these, and loathe to ask thee aught.
Yet lo! my husband's brother had my son
Thralled in his castle, and hath starved him dead;
And standeth seized[2] of that inheritance
Which thou that slewest the sire hast left the son.
So tho' I scarce can ask it thee for hate,
Grant me some knight to do the battle for me,
Kill the foul thief, and wreak[3] me for my son."

Then strode a good knight forward, crying to him,
"A boon, Sir King! I am her kinsman, I.
Give me to right her wrong, and slay the man."

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal, and cried,
"A boon, Sir King! even that thou grant her none,
This railer, that hath mocked thee in full hall—
None; or the wholesome boon of gyve and gag."

But Arthur, "We sit King, to help the wronged
Thro' all our realm. The woman loves her lord.
Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves and hates!
The kings of old had doomed thee to the flames,
Aurelius Emrys would have scourged thee dead,
And Uther slit thy tongue: but get thee hence—
Lest that rough humor of the kings of old
Return upon me! Thou that art her kin,
Go likewise; lay him low and slay him not,
But bring him here, that I may judge the right,
According to the justice of the King:
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless King
Who lived and died for men, the man shall die."

Then came in hall the messenger of Mark,
A name of evil savor in the land,
The Cornish king. In either hand he bore
What dazzled all, and shone far-off as shines
A field of charlock[4] in the sudden sun

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[1] *Whether.* Which.
[2] *seized of.* Possessing.
[3] *wreak.* Avenge.
[4] *charlock.* Mustard.

Between two showers, a cloth of palest gold,
Which down he laid before the throne, and knelt,
Delivering, that his lord, the vassal king,
Was ev'n upon his way to Camelot;
For having heard that Arthur of his grace
Had made his goodly cousin, Tristram, knight,
And, for[1] himself was of the greater state,
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord
Would yield him this large honor all the more;
So prayed him well to accept this cloth of gold,
In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth, to rend
In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.
An oak-tree smouldered there. "The goodly knight!
What! shall the shield of Mark stand among these?"
For, midway down the side of that long hall
A stately pile—whereof along the front,
Some blazoned,[2] some but carven, and some blank,
There ran a treble range of stony shields—
Rose, and high-arching overbrowed the hearth.
And under every shield a knight was named:
For this was Arthur's custom in his hall;
When some good knight had done one noble deed,
His arms were carven only; but if twain
His arms were blazoned also; but if none,
The shield was blank and bare, without a sign
Saving the name beneath; and Gareth saw
The shield of Gawain blazoned rich and bright,
And Modred's blank as death; and Arthur cried
To rend the cloth and cast it on the hearth.

"More like are we to reave[3] him of his crown
Than make him knight because men call him king.
The kings we found, ye know we stayed their hands
From war among themselves, but left them kings;
Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,
Truth-speaking, brave, good livers, them we enrolled
Among us, and they sit within our hall.
But Mark hath tarnished the great name of king,
As Mark would sully the low state of churl:
And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of gold,
Return, and meet, and hold him from our eyes,
Lest we should lap him up in cloth of lead,
Silenced for ever—craven—a man of plots,
Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside ambushings—
No fault of thine: let Kay the seneschal
Look to thy wants, and send thee satisfied—
Accursed, who strikes nor lets the hand be seen!"

And many another suppliant crying came
With noise of ravage wrought by beast and man,
And evermore a knight would ride away.

Last, Gareth, leaning both hands heavily
Down on the shoulders of the twain, his men,
Approached between them toward the King, and asked,
"A boon, Sir King" (his voice was all ashamed),
"For see ye not how weak and hunger-worn
I seem—leaning on these? grant me to serve
For meat and drink among thy kitchen-knaves
A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek my name.
Hereafter I will fight."

To him the King,
"A goodly youth and worth a goodlier boon!
But so thou wilt no goodlier, then must Kay,
The master of the meats and drinks, be thine."

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[1] *for.* Since.
[2] *blazoned.* Bearing the heraldic colors.
[3] *reave.* Deprive.

He rose and passed; then Kay, a man of mien
Wan-sallow as the plant that feels itself
Root-bitten by white lichen,

"Lo ye now!
This fellow hath broken from some Abbey, where,
God wot, he had not beef and brewis[1] enow,
However that might chance! but an he work,
Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,
And sleeker shall he shine than any hog."

Then Lancelot standing near, "Sir Seneschal,
Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray,[2] and all the hounds;
A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost not know:
Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair and fine,
High nose, a nostril large and fine, and hands
Large, fair and fine!—Some young lad's mystery—
But, or from sheepcot or king's hall, the boy
Is noble-natured. Treat him with all grace,
Lest he should come to shame thy judging of him."

Then Kay, "What murmurest thou of mystery?
Think ye this fellow will poison the King's dish?
Nay, for he spake too fool-like: mystery!
Tut, an the lad were noble, he had asked
For horse and armor: fair and fine, forsooth!
Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see thou to it
That thine own fineness, Lancelot, some fine day
Undo thee not—and leave my man to me."

So Gareth all for glory underwent
The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage;
Ate with young lads his portion by the door,
And couched at night with grimy kitchen-knaves.
And Lancelot ever spake him pleasantly,
But Kay the seneschal, who loved him not,
Would hustle and harry[3] him, and labor him
Beyond his comrade of the hearth, and set
To turn the broach,[4] draw water, or hew wood,
Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bowed himself
With all obedience to the King, and wrought
All kind of service with a noble ease
That graced the lowliest act in doing it.
And when the thralls had talk among themselves,
And one would praise the love that linked the King
And Lancelot—how the King had saved his life
In battle twice, and Lancelot once the King's—
For Lancelot was the first in Tournament,
But Arthur mightiest on the battle-field—
Gareth was glad. Or if some other told,
How once the wandering forester at dawn,
Far over the blue tarns[5] and hazy seas,
On Caer-Eryri's[6] highest found the King,
A naked babe, of whom the Prophet spake,
"He passes to the Isle Avilion,
He passes and is healed and cannot die"—
Gareth was glad. But if their talk were foul,
Then would he whistle rapid as any lark,
Or carol some old roundelay, and so loud
That first they mocked, but, after, reverenced him.
Or Gareth, telling some prodigious tale
Of knights who sliced a red life-bubbling way
Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon, held
All in a gap-mouthed circle his good mates
Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,
Charmed; till Sir Kay, the seneschal, would come
Blustering upon them, like a sudden wind
Among dead leaves, and drive them all apart.

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[1] *brewis.* Broth.
[2] *gray.* Greyhound.
[3] *harry.* Drive.
[4] *broach.* Roasting spit.
[5] *tarns.* Lakes.
[6] *Caer-Eryri.* Mount Snowdon.

Or when the thralls had sport among themselves,
So there were any trial of mastery,
He, by two yards in casting bar or stone
Was counted best; and if there chanced a joust,
So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to go,
Would hurry thither, and when he saw the knights
Clash like the coming and retiring wave,
And the spear spring, and good horse reel, the boy
Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among the thralls;
But in the weeks that followed, the good Queen,
Repentant of the word she made him swear,
And saddening in her childless castle, sent,
Between the in-crescent and de-crescent moon,
Arms for her son, and loosed him from his vow.

This, Gareth hearing from a squire of Lot
With whom he used to play at tourney once,
When both were children, and in lonely haunts
Would scratch a ragged oval on the sand,
And each at either dash from either end—
Shame never made girl redder than Gareth joy.
He laughed; he sprang. "Out of the smoke, at once
I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's knee—
These news be mine, none other's—nay, the King's—
Descend into the city": whereon he sought
The King alone, and found, and told him all.

"I have staggered thy strong Gawain in a tilt
For pastime; yea, he said it: joust can I.
Make me thy knight—in secret! let my name
Be hidd'n, and give me the first quest, I spring
Like flame from ashes."

Here the King's calm eye
Fell on, and checked, and made him flush, and bow
Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answered him,
"Son, the good mother let me know thee here,
And sent her wish that I would yield thee thine.
Make thee my knight? my knights are sworn to vows
Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,
And uttermost obedience to the King."

Then Gareth, lightly springing from his knees,
"My King, for hardihood I can promise thee.
For uttermost obedience make demand
Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,
No mellow master of the meats and drinks!
And as for love, God wot, I love not yet,
But love I shall, God willing."

And the King—
"Make thee my knight in secret? yea, but he,
Our noblest brother, and our truest man,
And one with me in all, he needs must know."

"Let Lancelot know, my King, let Lancelot know,
Thy noblest and thy truest!"

And the King—
"But wherefore would ye men should wonder at you?
Nay, rather for the sake of me, their King,
And the deed's sake my knighthood do the deed,
Than to be noised of."

Merrily Gareth asked,
"Have I not earned my cake in baking of it?
Let be my name until I make my name!
My deeds will speak: it is but for a day."
So with a kindly hand on Gareth's arm
Smiled the great King, and half-unwillingly,
Loving his lusty youthhood, yielded to him.
Then, after summoning Lancelot privily,

"I have given him the first quest: he is not proven.
Look therefore, when he calls for this in hall,
Thou get to horse and follow him far away.
Cover the lions on thy shield, and see
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en nor slain."

Then that same day there passed into the hall
A damsel of high lineage, and a brow
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-blossom,
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender nose
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower;
She into hall passed with her page and cried,

"O King, for thou hast driven the foe without
See to the foe within! bridge, ford, beset
By bandits, every one that owns a tower
The lord for half a league. Why sit ye there?
Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were king,
Till ev'n the lonest hold were all as free
From cursèd bloodshed, as thine altar-cloth
From that best blood it is a sin to spill."

"Comfort thyself," said Arthur, "I nor mine
Rest: so my knighthood keep the vows they swore,
The wastest moorland of our realm shall be
Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall.
What is thy name? thy need?"

"My name?" she said—
"Lynette my name; noble; my need, a knight
To combat for my sister, Lyonors,
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,
And comely, yea, and comelier than myself.
She lives in Castle Perilous: a river
Runs in three loops about her living-place;
And o'er it are three passings, and three knights
Defend the passings, brethren, and a fourth
And of that four the mightiest, holds her stayed
In her own castle, and so besieges her
To break her will, and make her wed with him:
And but delays his purport till thou send
To do the battle with him, thy chief man
Sir Lancelot, whom he trusts to overthrow,
Then wed, with glory: but she will not wed
Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.
Now, therefore, have I come for Lancelot."

Then Arthur, mindful of Sir Gareth, asked,
"Damsel, ye know this Order lives to crush
All wrongers of the Realm. But say, these four,
Who be they? What the fashion of the men?"

"They be of foolish fashion, O Sir King,
The fashion of that old knight-errantry
Who ride abroad, and do but what they will;
Courteous or bestial from the moment, such
As have nor law nor king; and three of these
Proud in their fantasy call themselves the Day,
Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and Evening-Star,
Being strong fools; and never a whit more wise
The fourth, who alway rideth armed in black,
A huge man-beast of boundless savagery.
He names himself the Night and oftener Death,
And wears a helmet mounted with a skull,
And bears a skeleton figured on his arms,
To show that who may slay or scape the three,
Slain by himself, shall enter endless night.
And all these four be fools, but mighty men,
And therefore am I come for Lancelot."

Hereat Sir Gareth called from where he rose,

A head with kindling eyes above the throng,
"A boon, Sir King—this quest!" then—for he marked
Kay near him groaning like a wounded bull—
"Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-knave am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I,
And I can topple over a hundred such.
Thy promise, King," and Arthur, glancing at him,
Brought down a momentary brow. "Rough, sudden,
And pardonable, worthy to be knight—
Go therefore," and all hearers were amazed.

But on the damsel's forehead shame, pride, wrath
Slew the May-white: she lifted either arm,
"Fie on thee, King! I asked for thy chief knight,
And thou hast given me but a kitchen-knave."
Then ere a man in hall could stay her, turned,
Fled down the lane of access to the King,
Took horse, descended the slope street, and passed
The weird white gate, and paused without, beside
The field of tourney, murmuring "kitchen-knave."

Now two great entries opened from the hall,
At one end one, that gave upon a range
Of level pavement where the King would pace
At sunrise, gazing over plain and wood;
And down from this a lordly stairway sloped
Till lost in blowing trees and tops of towers;
And out by this main doorway passed the King.
But one was counter to the hearth, and rose
High that the highest-crested helm could ride
Therethro' nor graze; and by this entry fled
The damsel in her wrath, and on to this
Sir Gareth strode, and saw without the door
King Arthur's gift, the worth of half a town,
A warhorse of the best, and near it stood
The two that out of north had followed him:
This bare a maiden shield, a casque; that held
The horse, the spear; whereat Sir Gareth loosed
A cloak that dropped from collar-bone to heel,
A cloth of roughest web, and cast it down,
And from it, like a fuel-smothered fire,
That looked half-dead, brake bright, and flashed as those
Dull-coated things, that making slide apart
Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath there burns
A jeweled harness, ere they pass and fly.
So Gareth, ere he parted, flashed in arms.
Then as he donned the helm, and took the shield,
And mounted horse and grasped a spear, of grain
Storm-strengthened on a windy site, and tipped
With trenchant steel, around him slowly pressed
The people, while from out of kitchen came
The thralls in throng, and seeing who had worked
Lustier than any, and whom they could but love,
Mounted in arms, threw up their caps and cried,
"God bless the King, and all his fellowship!"
And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth rode
Down the slope street, and passed without the gate.

So Gareth passed with joy; but as the cur
Plucked from the cur he fights with, ere his cause
Be cooled by fighting, follows, being named,
His owner, but remembers all, and growls
Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the door

Muttered in scorn of Gareth whom he used
To harry and hustle.

"Bound upon a quest
With horse and arms—the King hath passed his time—
My scullion knave! Thralls, to your work again,
For an your fire be low ye kindle mine!
Will there be dawn in West and eve in East?
Begone!—my knave!—belike and like enow
Some old head-blow not heeded in his youth
So shook his wits they wander in his prime—
Crazed! How the villain lifted up his voice,
Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-knave.
Tut, he was tame and meek enow with me,
Till peacocked up with Lancelot's noticing.
Well—I will after my loud knave, and learn
Whether he know me for his master yet.
Out of the smoke he came, and so my lance
Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the mire—
Thence, if the King awaken from his craze,
Into the smoke again."

But Lancelot said,
"Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against the King,
For that did never he whereon ye rail,
But ever meekly served the King in thee?
Abide: take counsel; for this lad is great
And lusty, and knowing both of lance and sword."
"Tut, tell not me," said Kay, "ye are overfine
To mar stout knaves with foolish courtesies":
Then mounted, on thro' silent faces rode
Down the slope city, and out beyond the gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering yet
Muttered the damsel, "Wherefore did the King
Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot lacked, at least
He might have yielded to me one of those
Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,
Rather than—O sweet heaven! O fie upon him!—
His kitchen-knave."

To whom Sir Gareth drew
(And there were none but few goodlier than he)
Shining in arms, "Damsel, the quest is mine.
Lead, and I follow." She thereat, as one
That smells a foul-fleshed agaric[1] in the holt,[2]
And deems it carrion of some woodland thing,
Or shrew, or weasel, nipped her slender nose
With petulant thumb and finger, shrilling, "Hence!
Avoid, thou smellest all of kitchen-grease.
And look who comes behind," for there was Kay.
"Knowest thou not me? thy master? I am Kay.
We lack thee by the hearth."

And Gareth to him,
"Master no more! too well I know thee, ay—
The most ungentle knight in Arthur's hall."
"Have at thee, then," said Kay: they shocked, and Kay
Fell shoulder-slipped, and Gareth cried again,
"Lead, and I follow," and fast away she fled.

But after sod and shingle[3] ceased to fly
Behind her, and the heart of her good horse
Was nigh to burst with violence of the beat,
Perforce she stayed, and overtaken spoke.

"What dost thou, scullion, in my fellowship?
Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught the more
Or love thee better, that by some device
Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,
Thou hast overthrown and slain thy master—thou!—
Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon!—to me
Thou smellest all of kitchen as before."

[1] *agaric.* Fungus.
[2] *holt.* Wood.
[3] *shingle.* Sand.

"Damsel," Sir Gareth answered gently, "say
Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye say,
I leave not till I finish this fair quest,
Or die therefor."

"Ay, wilt thou finish it?
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he talks!
The listening rogue hath caught the manner of it.
But, knave, anon thou shalt be met with, knave,
And then by such a one that thou for all
The kitchen brewis that was ever supped
Shalt not once dare to look him in the face.

"I shall assay,"[1] said Gareth with a smile
That maddened her, and away she flashed again
Down the long avenues of a boundless wood,
And Gareth following was again beknaved.

"Sir Kitchen-knave, I have missed the only way
Where Arthur's men are set along the wood;
The wood is nigh as full of thieves as leaves:
If both be slain, I am rid of thee: but yet,
Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit of thine?
Fight, an thou canst: I have missed the only way."

So till the dusk that followed evensong
Rode on the two, reviler and reviled;
Then after one long slope was mounted, saw,
Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thousand pines
A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink
To westward—in the deeps whereof a mere,[2]
Round as the red eye of an Eagle-owl,
Under the half-dead sunset glared; and shouts
Ascended, and there brake a servingman
Flying from out of the black wood, and crying,
"They have bound my lord to cast him in the mere."
Then Gareth, "Bound am I to right the wronged,
But straitlier bound am I to bide with thee."
And when the damsel spake contemptuously,
"Lead, and I follow," Gareth cried again,
"Follow, I lead!" so down among the pines
He plunged; and there, blackshadowed nigh the mere,
And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and reed,
Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,
A stone about his neck to drown him in it.
Three with good blows he quieted, but three
Fled thro' the pines; and Gareth loosed the stone
From off his neck, then in the mere beside
Tumbled it; oilily bubbled up the mere.
Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free feet
Set him, a stalwart Baron, Arthur's friend.

"Well that ye came, or else these caitiff rogues
Had wreaked themselves on me; good cause is theirs
To hate me, for my wont hath ever been
To catch my thief, and then like vermin here
Drown him, and with a stone about his neck;
And under this wan[3] water many of them
Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,
And rise, and flickering in a grimly light
Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have saved a life
Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this wood.
And fain would I reward thee worshipfully.[4]
What guerdon will ye?"

Gareth sharply spake;
"None! for the deed's sake have I done the deed,
In uttermost obedience to the King.
But wilt thou yield this damsel harborage?"

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[1] *assay.* Make trial.
[2] *mere.* Lake.
[3] *wan.* Dark.
[4] *worshipfully.* Honorably.

Whereat the Baron saying, "I well believe
You be of Arthur's Table," a light laugh
Broke from Lynette, "Ay, truly of a truth,
And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-knave!—
But deem not I accept thee aught the more,
Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit
Down on a rout of craven foresters.
A thresher with his flail had[1] scattered them.
Nay—for thou smellest of the kitchen still.
But an this lord will yield us harborage,
Well."

So she spake. A league beyond the wood,
All in a full-fair manor and a rich,
His towers, where that day a feast had been
Held in high hall, and many a viand left,
And many a costly cate,[2] received the three.
And there they placed a peacock in his pride
Before the damsel, and the Baron set
Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

"Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,
Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.
Hear me—this morn I stood in Arthur's hall,
And prayed the King would grant me Lancelot
To fight the brotherhood of Day and Night—
The last a monster unsubduable
Of any save of him for whom I called—
Suddenly bawls this frontless[3] kitchen-knave,
'The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I.'
Then Arthur, all at once gone mad, replies,
'Go therefore,' and so gives the quest to him—
Him—here—a villain fitter to stick swine
Than ride abroad redressing women's wrong,
Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman."

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed, the lord
Now looked at one and now at other, left
The damsel by the peacock in his pride,
And, seating Gareth at another board,
Sat down beside him, ate and then began.

"Friend, whether thou be kitchen-knave, or not,
Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,
And whether she be mad, or else the King,
Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,
I ask not: but thou strikest a strong stroke,
For strong thou art and goodly therewithal,
And saver of my life; and therefore now,
For here be mighty men to joust with, weigh[4]
Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel back
To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.
Thy pardon; I but speak for thine avail,
The saver of my life."

And Gareth said,
"Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,
Despite of Day and Night and Death and Hell."

So when, next morn, the lord whose life he saved
Had, some brief space, conveyed them on their way
And left them with God-speed, Sir Gareth spake,
"Lead, and I follow." Haughtily she replied,

"I fly no more: I allow thee for an hour.
Lion and stoat have isled[5] together, knave,
In time of flood. Nay, furthermore, methinks
Some ruth[6] is mine for thee. Back wilt thou, fool?
For hard by here is one will overthrow
And slay thee: then will I to court again,

---

[1] *had.* Would have.
[2] *cate.* Dainty.
[3] *frontless.* Shameless.
[4] *weigh.* Consider.
[5] *isled.* Found island shelter.
[6] *ruth.* Pity.

And shame the King for only yielding me
My champion from the ashes of his hearth."

To whom Sir Gareth answered courteously,
"Say thou thy say, and I will do my deed.
Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt find
My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay
Among the ashes and wedded the King's son."

Then to the shore of one of those long loops
Wherethro' the serpent river coiled, they came.
Rough-thicketed were the banks and steep; the stream
Full, narrow; this a bridge of single arc
Took at a leap; and on the further side
Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold
In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily[1] in hue,
Save that the dome was purple, and above,
Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.
And therebefore the lawless warrior paced
Unarmed, and calling, "Damsel, is this he,
The champion thou hast brought from Arthur's hall
For whom we let thee pass?" "Nay, nay," she said,
"Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter scorn
Of thee and thy much folly hath sent thee here
His kitchen-knave: and look thou to thyself:
See that he fall not on thee suddenly,
And slay thee unarmed: he is not knight but knave."

Then at his call, "O daughters of the Dawn,
And servants of the Morning-Star, approach,
Arm me," from out the silken curtain-folds
Bare-footed and bare-headed three fair girls
In gilt and rosy raiment came: their feet
In dewy grasses glistened; and the hair
All over glanced with dewdrop or with gem
Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.[2]
These armed him in blue arms, and gave a shield
Blue also, and thereon the morning star.
And Gareth silent gazed upon the knight,
Who stood a moment, ere his horse was brought,
Glorying; and in the stream beneath him, shone
Immingled with Heaven's azure waveringly,
The gay pavilion and the naked feet,
His arms, the rosy raiment, and the star.

Then she that watched him, "Wherefore stare ye so?
Thou shakest in thy fear: there yet is time:
Flee down the valley before he get to horse.
Who will cry shame? Thou art not knight but knave."

Said Gareth, "Damsel, whether knave or knight,
Far liefer had I fight a score of times
Than hear thee so missay me and revile.
Fair words were best for him who fights for thee;
But truly foul are better, for they send
That strength of anger thro' mine arms, I know
That I shall overthrow him."

And he that bore
The star, when mounted, cried from o'er the bridge,
"A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of me!
Such fight not I, but answer scorn with scorn.
For this were shame to do him further wrong
Than set him on his feet, and take his horse
And arms, and so return him to the King.
Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly, knave.

---

[1] *Lent-lily.* Daffodil.

[2] *Avanturine.* Sparkling quartz.

Avoid: for it beseemeth not a knave
To ride with such a lady."

"Dog, thou liest!
I spring from loftier lineage than thine own."
He spake; and all at fiery speed the two
Shocked on the central bridge, and either spear
Bent but not brake, and either knight at once,
Hurled as a stone from out of a catapult
Beyond his horse's crupper and the bridge,
Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and drew,
And Gareth lashed so fiercely with his brand
He drave his enemy backward down the bridge,
The damsel crying, "Well-stricken, kitchen-knave!"
Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but one stroke
Laid him that clove it grovelling on the ground.

Then cried the fall'n, "Take not my life: I yield."
And Gareth, "So this damsel ask it of me
Good—I accord it easily as a grace."
She reddening, "Insolent scullion: I of thee?
I bound to thee for any favor asked!"
"Then shall he die." And Gareth there unlaced
His helmet as to slay him, but she shrieked,
"Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay
One nobler than thyself." "Damsel, thy charge
Is an abounding pleasure to me. Knight,
Thy life is thine at her command. Arise
And quickly pass to Arthur's hall, and say
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee. See thou crave
His pardon for thy breaking of his laws.
Myself, when I return, will plead for thee.
Thy shield is mine—farewell; and, damsel, thou,
Lead, and I follow."

And fast away she fled.
Then when he came upon her, spake, "Methought,
Knave, when I watched thee striking on the bridge
The savor of thy kitchen came upon me
A little faintlier; but the wind hath changed;
I scent it twenty-fold." And then she sang,
"'O morning star' (not that tall felon there
Whom thou by sorcery or unhappiness
Or some device, hast foully overthrown),
'O morning star that smilest in the blue,
O star, my morning dream hath proven true,
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath smiled on me.'

"But thou begone, take counsel, and away,
For hard by here is one that guards a ford—
The second brother in their fool's parable—
Will pay thee all thy wages, and to boot.
Care not for shame: thou art not knight but knave."

To whom Sir Gareth answered laughingly,
"Parables? Hear a parable of the knave.
When I was kitchen-knave among the rest
Fierce was the hearth, and one of my co-mates
Owned a rough dog, to whom he cast his coat,—
'Guard it,' and there was none to meddle with it.
And such a coat art thou, and thee the King
Gave me to guard, and such a dog am I,
To worry, and not to flee—and—knight or knave—
The knave that doth thee service as full knight
Is all as good, meseems, as any knight
Toward thy sister's freeing."

"Ay, Sir Knave!
Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a knight,
Being but knave, I hate thee all the more."

"Fair damsel, you should worship[1] me the more,
That, being but knave, I throw thine enemies."

"Ay, ay," she said, "but thou shalt meet thy match."

---

[1] *worship.* Honor.

So when they touched the second river-loop,
Huge on a huge red horse, and all in mail
Burnished to blinding, shone the Noonday Sun
Beyond a raging shallow. As if the flower,
That blows a globe of after arrowlets,[1]
Ten thousand-fold had grown, flashed the fierce shield,
All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying blots
Before them when he turned from watching him.
He from beyond the roaring shallow roared,
"What doest thou, brother, in my marches[2] here?"
And she athwart the shallow shrilled again,
"Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's hall
Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath his arms."
"Ugh!" cried the Sun, and vizoring up a red
And cipher face of rounded foolishness,
Pushed horse across the foamings of the ford,
Whom Gareth met mid-stream: no room was there
For lance or tourney-skill: four strokes they struck
With sword, and these were mighty; the new knight
Had fear he might be shamed; but as the Sun
Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the fifth,
The hoof of his horse slipped in the stream, the stream
Descended, and the Sun was washed away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the ford;
So drew him home; but he that fought no more,
As being all bone-battered on the rock,
Yielded; and Gareth sent him to the King.
"Myself when I return will plead for thee"—
"Lead, and I follow." Quietly she led.
"Hath not the good wind, damsel, changed again?"
"Nay, not a point: nor art thou victor here.
There lies a ridge of slate across the ford;
His horse thereon stumbled—ay, for I saw it.

"'O Sun' (not this strong fool whom thou, Sir Knave,
Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappiness),[3]
'O Sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,
O moon, that layest all to sleep again,
Shine sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me.'

"What knowest thou of lovesong or of love?
Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly born,
Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea, perchance,—

"'O dewy flowers that open to the sun,
O dewy flowers that close when day is done,
Blow sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me.'

"What knowest thou of flowers, except, belike,
To garnish meats with? hath not our good King
Who lent me thee, the flower of kitchendom,
A foolish love for flowers? what stick ye round
The pasty? wherewithal deck the boar's head?
Flowers? nay, the boar hath rosemaries and bay.

"'O birds, that warble to the morning sky,
O birds that warble as the day goes by,
Sing sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me.'

"What knowest thou of birds, lark, mavis, merle,
Linnet? what dream ye when they utter forth
May-music growing with the growing light,
Their sweet sun-worship? these be for the snare
(So runs thy fancy), these be for the spit,

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[1] The dandelion.
[2] *marches.* Territory.
[3] *unhappiness.* Mischance.

Larding and basting. See thou have not now
Larded thy last, except thou turn and fly.
There stands the third fool of their allegory."

For there beyond a bridge of treble bow,[1]
All in a rose-red from the west, and all
Naked it seemed, and glowing in the broad
Deep-dimpled current underneath, the knight,
That named himself the Star of Evening, stood.

And Gareth, "Wherefore waits the madman there
Naked in open dayshine?" "Nay," she cried,
"Not naked, only wrapt in hardened skins
That fit him like his own; and so ye cleave
His armor off him, these will turn the blade."

Then the third brother shouted o'er the bridge,
"O brother-star, why shine ye here so low?
Thy ward[2] is higher up: but have ye slain
The damsel's champion?" and the damsel cried,

"No star of thine, but shot from Arthur's heaven
With all disaster unto thine and thee!
For both thy younger brethren have gone down
Before this youth; and so wilt thou, Sir Star;
Art thou not old?"

"Old, damsel, old and hard,
Old, with the might and breath of twenty boys."
Said Gareth, "Old, and over-bold in brag!
But that same strength which threw the Morning Star
Can throw the Evening."

Then that other blew
A hard and deadly note upon the horn.
"Approach and arm me!" With slow steps from out
An old storm-beaten, russet, many-stained
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel came,
And armed him in old arms, and brought a helm
With but a drying evergreen for crest,
And gave a shield whereon the Star of Even
Half-tarnished and half-bright, his emblem, shone.
But when it glittered o'er the saddle-bow,
They madly hurled together on the bridge;
And Gareth overthrew him, lighted, drew,
There met him drawn, and overthrew him again;
But up like fire he started: and as oft
As Gareth brought him grovelling on his knees,
So many a time he vaulted up again;
Till Gareth panted hard, and his great heart,
Foredooming all his trouble was in vain,
Labored within him, for he seemed as one
That all in later, sadder age begins
To war against ill uses of a life,
But these from all his life arise, and cry,
"Thou hast made us lords, and canst not put us down!"
He half despairs; so Gareth seemed to strike
Vainly, the damsel clamoring all the while,
"Well done, knave-knight, well stricken, O good knight-knave—
O knave, as noble as any of all the knights—
Shame me not, shame me not. I have prophesied—
Strike, thou art worthy of the Table Round—
His arms are old, he trusts the hardened skin—
Strike — strike — the wind will never change again."
And Gareth, hearing, ever stronglier smote,
And hewed great pieces of his armor off him,
But lashed in vain against the hardened skin,
And could not wholly bring him under, more
Than loud Southwesterns, rolling ridge on ridge,
The buoy that rides at sea, and dips and springs
For ever; till at length Sir Gareth's brand
Clashed his, and brake it utterly to the hilt.

---

[1] *treble bow.* Triple arch.
[2] *ward.* Position.

"I have thee now;" but forth that other sprang,
And, all unknightlike, writhed his wiry arms
Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,
Strangled, but straining ev'n his uttermost
Cast, and so hurled him headlong o'er the bridge
Down to the river, sink or swim, and cried,
"Lead, and I follow."

But the damsel said,
"I lead no longer; ride thou at my side;
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-knaves.

"'O trefoil,[1] sparkling on the rainy plain,
O rainbow with three colors after rain,
Shine sweetly: thrice my love hath smiled on me.'

"Sir,—and, good faith, I fain had added Knight,
But that I heard thee call thyself a knave,—
Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,
Missaid thee; noble I am; and thought the King
Scorned me and mine; and now thy pardon, friend,
For thou hast ever answered courteously,
And wholly bold thou art, and meek withal
As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,
Hast mazed my wit: I marvel what thou art."

"Damsel," he said, "you be not all to blame,
Saving that you mistrusted our good King
Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking, one
Not fit to cope your quest. You said your say;
Mine answer was my deed. Good sooth! I hold
He scarce is knight, yea but half-man, nor meet
To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets
His heart be stirred with any foolish heat
At any gentle damsel's waywardness.
Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings fought for me:
And seeing now thy words are fair, methinks
There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his great self,
Hath force to quell me."

Nigh upon that hour
When the lone hern[2] forgets his melancholy,
Lets down his other leg, and stretching, dreams
Of goodly supper in the distant pool,
Then turned the noble damsel smiling at him,
And told him of a cavern hard at hand,
Where bread and baken meats and good red wine
Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors
Had sent her coming champion, waited him.

Anon they passed a narrow comb wherein
Were slabs of rock with figures, knights on horse
Sculptured, and decked in slowly-waning hues.
"Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once was here,
Whose holy hand hath fashioned on the rock
The war of Time against the soul of man.
And yon four fools have sucked their allegory
From these damp walls, and taken but the form.
Know ye not these?" and Gareth looked and read—
In letters like to those the vexillary[3]
Hath left crag-carven o'er the streaming Gelt—
"Phosphorus," then "Meridies,"—"Hesperus"[4]—
"Nox"—"Mors,"[5] beneath five figures, armèd men,
Slab after slab, their faces forward all,
And running down the Soul, a Shape that fled
With broken wings, torn raiment and loose hair,
For help and shelter to the hermit's cave.

---

[1] *trefoil.* Clover (or a similar plant).

[2] *hern.* Heron.

[3] *vexillary.* Standard-bearer. (A Roman soldier carved an inscription on the rocks above the River Gelt which still remains.)

[4] Dawn, Noon, Evening.

[5] *Nox, Mors.* Night, Death.

"Follow the faces, and we find it.—Look,
Who comes behind?"

For one—delayed at first
Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay
To Camelot, then by what thereafter chanced,
The damsel's headlong error[1] thro' the wood—
Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-loops—
His blue shield-lions covered—softly drew
Behind the twain, and when he saw the star
Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him, cried,
"Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for my friend."
And Gareth crying pricked against the cry;
But when they closed—in a moment—at one touch
Of that skilled spear, the wonder of the world—
Went sliding down so easily, and fell,
That when he found the grass within his hands
He laughed; the laughter, jarred upon Lynette:
Harshly she asked him, "Shamed and overthrown,
And tumbled back into the kitchen-knave,
Why laugh ye? that ye blew your boast in vain?"
"Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the son
Of old King Lot and good Queen Bellicent,
And victor of the bridges and the ford,
And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown by whom
I know not, all thro' mere unhappiness—
Device and sorcery and unhappiness—
Out, sword; we are thrown!" And Lancelot answered, "Prince,
O Gareth—thro' the mere unhappiness
Of one who came to help thee, not to harm,
Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee whole,
As on the day when Arthur knighted him."

Then Gareth, "Thou—Lancelot!—thine the hand
That threw me? An some chance to mar the boast
Thy brethren of thee make—which could not chance—
Had sent thee down before a lesser spear,
Shamed had I been, and sad—O Lancelot—thou!"

Whereat the maiden, petulant: "Lancelot,
Why came ye not, when called? and wherefore now
Come ye, not called? I gloried in my knave,
Who being still rebuked, would answer still
Courteous as any knight—but now, if knight,
The marvel dies, and leaves me fooled and tricked,
And only wondering wherefore played upon:
And doubtful whether I and mine be scorned.
Where should be truth if not in Arthur's hall,
In Arthur's presence? Knight, knave, prince and fool,
I hate thee and for ever."

And Lancelot said,
"Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight art thou
To the King's best wish. O damsel, be you wise
To call him shamed, who is but overthrown?
Thrown have I been, nor once, but many a time.
Victor from vanquished issues at the last,
And overthrower from being overthrown.
With sword we have not striven; and thy good horse
And thou are weary; yet not less I felt
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance of thine.
Well hast thou done; for all the stream is freed,
And thou hast wreaked his justice on his foes,
And when reviled, hast answered graciously,
And makest merry when overthrown. Prince, Knight,
Hail, Knight and Prince, and of our Table Round!"

And then when turning to Lynette he told
The tale of Gareth, petulantly she said,

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[1] *error*. wandering.

"Ay well—ay well—for worse than being fooled
Of others, is to fool one's self. A cave,
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats and drinks
And forage for the horse, and flint for fire.
But all about it flies a honeysuckle.
Seek, till we find." And when they sought and found,
Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his life
Passed into sleep; on whom the maiden gazed.
"Sound sleep be thine! sound cause to sleep hast thou.
Wake lusty! Seem I not as tender to him
As any mother? Ay, but such a one
As all day long hath rated[1] at her child,
And vexed his day, but blesses him asleep—
Good Lord, how sweetly smells the honeysuckle
In the hushed night, as if the world were one
Of utter peace, and love, and gentleness!
O Lancelot, Lancelot,"—and she clapped her hands—
"Full merry am I to find my goodly knave
Is knight and noble. See now, sworn have I—
Else yon black felon had not let me pass—
To bring thee back to do the battle with him.
Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee first;
Who doubts thee victor? so will my knight-knave
Miss the full flower of this accomplishment."

Said Lancelot: "Peradventure, he you name
May know my shield. Let Gareth, an he will,
Change his for mine, and take my charger, fresh,
Not to be spurred, loving the battle as well
As he that rides him." "Lancelot-like," she said,
"Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as in all."
And Gareth, wakening, fiercely clutched the shield;
"Ramp, ye lance-splintering lions, on whom all spears
Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to roar!
Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your lord!—
Care not, good beasts, so well I care for you.
O noble Lancelot, from my hold on these
Streams virtue—fire—thro' one that will not shame
Even the shadow of Lancelot under shield.
Hence: let us go."

Silent the silent field
They traversed. Arthur's Harp,[2] tho' summer-wan,
In counter motion to the clouds, allured
The glance of Gareth dreaming on his liege.[3]
A star shot: "Lo," said Gareth, "the foe falls!"
An owl whooped: "Hark the victor pealing there!"
Suddenly she that rode upon his left
Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent him, crying,
"Yield, yield him this again: 'tis he must fight:
I curse the tongue that all thro' yesterday
Reviled thee, and hath wrought on Lancelot now
To lend thee horse and shield: wonders ye have done;
Miracles ye cannot: here is glory enow
In having flung the three: I see thee maimed,
Mangled: I swear thou canst not fling the fourth."

"And wherefore, damsel? tell me all ye know.
You cannot scare me; nor rough face, or voice,
Brute bulk of limb, or boundless savagery
Appal me from the quest."

"Nay, Prince," she cried,
"God wot, I never looked upon the face,
Seeing he never rides abroad by day,
But watched him have I like a phantom pass
Chilling the night: nor have I heard the voice.

---

[1] *rated.* Scolded.

[2] *Arthur's Harp.* The constellation Lyra.

[3] *liege.* Prince.

Always he made his mouthpiece of a page
Who came and went, and still reported him
As closing in himself the strength of ten,
And when his anger tare him, massacring
Man, woman, lad and girl—yea, the soft babe!
Some hold that he hath swallowed infant flesh,
Monster! O Prince, I went for Lancelot first,
The quest is Lancelot's: give him back the shield."

Said Gareth laughing, "An he fight for this,
Belike he wins it as the better man:
Thus—and not else!"

But Lancelot on him urged
All the devisings of their chivalry
When one might meet a mightier than himself;
How best to manage horse, lance, sword and shield,
And so fill up the gap where force might fail
With skill and fineness. Instant[1] were his words.

Then Gareth, "Here be rules. I know but one—
To dash against mine enemy and to win.
Yet have I watched thee victor in the joust,
And seen thy way." "Heaven help thee!" sighed Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud that grew
To thunder-gloom palling all stars, they rode
In converse till she made her palfrey halt,
Lifted an arm, and softly whispered, "There."
And all the three were silent, seeing, pitched
Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,
A huge pavilion like a mountain peak
Sunder the glooming crimson on the marge,[2]
Black, with black banner, and a long black horn
Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth grasped,
And so, before the two could hinder him,
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all the horn.
Echoed the walls, a light twinkled; anon
Came lights and lights, and once again he blew;
Whereon were hollow tramplings up and down
And muffled voices heard, and shadows passed;
Till high above him, circled with her maids,
The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,
Beautiful among lights, and waving to him
White hands, and courtesy; but when the Prince
Three times had blown—after long hush—at last—
The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,
Thro' those black foldings, that which housed therein.
High on a nightblack horse, in nightblack arms,
With white breast-bone, and barren ribs of Death,
And crowned with fleshless laughter—some ten steps—
In the half-light—thro' the dim dawn—advanced
The monster, and then paused, and spake no word.

But Gareth spake and all indignantly,
"Fool, for thou hast, men say, the strength of ten,
Canst thou not trust the limbs thy God hath given,
But must, to make the terror of thee more,
Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries
Of that which Life hath done with, and the clod,
Less dull than thou, will hide with mantling flowers
As if for pity?" But he spake no word;
Which set the horror higher: a maiden swooned;
The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and wept,
As doomed to be the bride of Night and Death;
Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his helm;
And even Sir Lancelot thro' his warm blood felt

---

[1] *Instant.* Earnest.
[2] *Marge.* Horizon. (It is now dawn.)

Ice strike, and all that marked him were aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger fiercely neighed,
And Death's dark war-horse bounded forward with him.
Then those that did not blink the terror, saw
That Death was cast to ground, and slowly rose.
But with one stroke Sir Gareth split the skull.
Half fell to right and half to left and lay.
Then with a stronger buffet he clove the helm
As throughly[1] as the skull; and out from this
Issued the bright face of a blooming boy
Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying, "Knight,
Slay me not: my three brethren bade me do it,
To make a horror all about the house,
And stay the world from Lady Lyonors.
They never dreamed the passes would be passed."
Answered Sir Gareth graciously to one
Not many a moon his younger, "My fair child,
What madness made thee challenge the chief knight
Of Arthur's hall?" "Fair Sir, they bade me do it.
They hate the King, and Lancelot, the King's friend,
They hoped to slay him somewhere on the stream;
They never dreamed the passes could be passed."

Then sprang the happier day from underground;
And Lady Lyonors and her house, with dance
And revel and song, made merry over Death,
As being, after all their foolish fears
And horrors, only proven a blooming boy.
So large mirth lived, and Gareth won the quest.

And he that told the tale in older times
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,
But he, that told it later, says Lynette.

(1872)

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

ALFRED TENNYSON

[This poem deals with an incident of the days when the corruption and fall of Arthur's kingdom were beginning, the chief cause being the guilty love of Lancelot, Arthur's most trusted knight, and Guinevere, his Queen. It should be noticed that, after the opening of the poem, the story goes back (line 34) to the tale of the diamond necklace, and that we turn to the opening scene at line 396.]

Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the east
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;
Which first she placed where morning's earliest ray
Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam;
Then, fearing rust or soilure, fashioned for it
A case of silk, and braided thereupon
All the devices blazon'd on the shield
In their own tinct,[2] and added, of her wit,
A border fantasy of branch and flower,
And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.
Nor rested thus content, but day by day,
Leaving her household and good father, climbed
That eastern tower, and entering barred her door,
Stripped off the case, and read the naked shield,—
Now guessed a hidden meaning in his arms,
Now made a pretty history to herself
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,
And every scratch a lance had made upon it,
Conjecturing when and where: this cut is fresh;
That ten years back; this dealt him at Caerlyle;
That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:
And ah God's mercy, what a stroke was there!
And here a thrust that might have killed, but God
Broke the strong lance, and rolled his enemy down,
And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.[3]

How came the lily maid by that good shield

---

[1] *throughly.* Thoroughly.

[2] *tinct.* Color.

[3] *fantasy.* Imagination.

Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his name?
He left it with her, when he rode to tilt
For the great diamond in the diamond jousts,
Which Arthur had ordained, and by that name
Had named them, since a diamond was the prize.

For Arthur, long before they crowned him King,
Roving the trackless realms of Lyonesse,
Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.[1]
A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
Like its own mists to all the mountain side:
For here two brothers, one a king, had met
And fought together; but their names were lost;
And each had slain his brother at a blow;
And down they fell and made the glen abhorred:
And there they lay till all their bones were bleached,
And lichened into color with the crags:
And he, that once was king, had on a crown
Of diamonds, one in front, and four aside.
And Arthur came, and laboring up the pass,
All in a misty moonshine, unawares
Had trodden that crowned skeleton, and the skull
Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown
Rolled into light, and, turning on its rims,
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn;
And down the shingly scaur[2] he plunged, and caught,
And set it on his head, and in his heart
Heard murmurs, "Lo, thou likewise shalt be King."

Thereafter, when a King, he had the gems
Plucked from the crown, and showed them to his knights,
Saying, "These jewels, whereupon I chanced
Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the King's—
For public use: henceforward let there be,
Once every year, a joust for one of these:
For so by nine years' proof we needs must learn
Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall grow
In use of arms and manhood, till we drive
The heathen, who, some say, shall rule the land
Hereafter, which God hinder." Thus he spoke:
And eight years past, eight jousts had been, and still[3]
Had Lancelot won the diamond of the year,
With purpose to present them to the Queen,
When all were won; but, meaning all at once
To snare her royal fancy with a boon
Worth half her realm, had never spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and the last
And largest, Arthur, holding then his court
Hard on the river nigh the place which now
Is this world's hugest, let proclaim[4] a joust
At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh
Spake (for she had been sick) to Guinevere,
"Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot move
To these fair jousts?" "Yea, lord," she said, "ye know it."
"Then will ye miss," he answered, "the great deeds
Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,
A sight ye love to look on." And the Queen
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King.
He, thinking that he read her meaning there,
"Stay with me, I am sick; my love is more
Than many diamonds," yielded; and a heart
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen

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[1] *tarn.* Lake.
[2] *shingly scaur.* Sandy bank.
[3] *still.* Always.
[4] *let proclaim.* Had proclaimed.

(However much he yearned to make complete
The tale[1] of diamonds for his destined boon)
Urged him to speak against the truth, and say,
"Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly whole,
And lets[2] me from the saddle;" and the King
Glanced first at him, then her, and went his way.
No sooner gone than suddenly she began:

"To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much to blame!
Why go ye not to these fair jousts? the knights
Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd
Will murmur, 'Lo the shameless ones, who take
Their pastime now the trustful King is gone!'"
Then Lancelot, vexed at having lied in vain:
"Are ye so wise? ye were not once so wise,
My Queen, that summer, when ye loved me first.
Then of the crowd ye took no more account
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,
When its own voice clings to each blade of grass,
And every voice is nothing. As to knights,
Them surely can I silence with all ease.
But now my loyal worship[3] is allowed
Of all men: many a bard, without offence,
Has linked our names together in his lay,—
Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,
The pearl of beauty: and our knights at feast
Have pledged us in this union, while the King
Would listen smiling. How then? is there more?
Has Arthur spoken aught? or would yourself,
Now weary of my service and devoir,[4]
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?"

She broke into a little scornful laugh:
"Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,
That passionate perfection, my good lord—
But who can gaze upon the Sun in heaven?
He never spake word of reproach to me,
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,
He cares not for me: only here to-day
There gleamed a vague suspicion in his eyes:
Some meddling rogue has tampered with him—else
Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,
And swearing men to vows impossible,
To make them like himself: but, friend, to me
He is all fault who hath no fault at all:
For who loves me must have a touch of earth;
The low sun makes the color: I am yours,
Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the bond.
And therefore hear my words: go to the jousts:
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our dream
When sweetest; and the vermin voices here
May buzz so loud—we scorn them, but they sting."

Then answered Lancelot, the chief of knights:
"And with what face, after my pretext made,
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
Before a King who honors his own word,
As if it were his God's?"

"Yea," said the Queen,
"A moral child without the craft[5] to rule,
Else had he not lost me: but listen to me,
If I must find you wit: we hear it said
That men go down before your spear at a touch,
But knowing you are Lancelot; your great name,
This conquers: hide it therefore; go unknown:
Win! by this kiss you will: and our true King
Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,
As all for glory; for to speak him true,

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[1] *tale.* Number.
[2] *lets.* Hinders.
[3] *worship.* Honor.
[4] *devoir.* Devotion.
[5] *craft.* Skill.

Ye know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,
No keener hunter after glory breathes.
He loves it in his knights more than himself:
They prove to him his work: win and return."

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be known,
He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,
Chose the green path that showed the rarer foot,
And there among the solitary downs,
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
Till as he traced a faintly-shadowed track,
That all in loops and links among the dales
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
Fired[1] from the west, far on a hill, the towers.
Thither he made, and blew the gateway horn.
Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,
Who let him into lodging and disarmed.
And Lancelot marvelled at the wordless man;
And issuing found the Lord of Astolat
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,
Moving to meet him in the castle court;
And close behind them stepped the lily maid
Elaine, his daughter: mother of the house
There was not: some light jest among them rose
With laughter dying down as the great knight
Approached them: then the Lord of Astolat:
"Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name
Livest between the lips? for by thy state
And presence I might guess thee chief of those,
After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.
Him have I seen: the rest, his Table Round,
Known as they are, to me they are unknown."

Then answered Lancelot, the chief of knights:
"Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,
What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.
But since I go to joust as one unknown
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not;
Hereafter ye shall know me—and the shield—
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
Blank, or at least with some device not mine."

Then said the Lord of Astolat, "Here is Torre's:
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre.
And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
His ye can have." Then added plain Sir Torre,
"Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it."
Here laughed the father, saying, "Fie, Sir Churl,
Is that an answer for a noble knight?
Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger here,
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour,
And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
To make her thrice as wilful as before."

"Nay, father, nay good father, shame me not
Before this noble knight," said young Lavaine,
"For nothing. Surely I but played on Torre:
He seemed so sullen, vexed he could not go:
A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden dreamt
That some one put this diamond in her hand,
And that it was too slippery to be held,
And slipped and fell into some pool or stream,
The castle-well, belike; and then I said
That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it
(But all was jest and joke among ourselves)
Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.
But, father, give me leave, an if he will,
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight:

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[1] *Fired.* Lighted up.

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Win shall I not, but do my best to win:
Young as I am, yet would I do my best."

"So ye will grace me," answered Lancelot,
Smiling a moment, "with your fellowship
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,
Then were I glad of you as guide and friend:
And you shall win this diamond,—as I hear
It is a fair large diamond,—if ye may,
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will."
"A fair large diamond," added plain Sir Torre,
"Such be for queens, and not for simple maids."
Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,
Elaine, and heard her name so tossed about,
Flushed slightly at the slight disparagement
Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus returned:
"If what is fair be but for what is fair,
And only queens are to be counted so,
Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid
Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
Not violating the bond of like to like."

He spoke and ceased: the lily maid Elaine,
Won by the mellow voice before she looked,
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.
The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,
In battle with the love he bare his lord,
Had marred his face, and marked it ere his time.
Another[1] sinning on such heights with one,
The flower of all the west and all the world,
Had been the sleeker for it: but in him
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose
And drove him into wastes and solitudes
For agony, who was yet a living soul.
Marred as he was, he seemed the goodliest man
That ever among ladies ate in hall,
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.
However marred, of more than twice her years,
Seamed with an ancient swordcut on the cheek,
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall
Stepped with all grace, and not with half disdain
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
But kindly man moving among his kind:
Whom they with meats and vintage of their best
And talk and minstrel melody entertained.
And much they asked of court and Table Round,
And ever well and readily answered he:
But Lancelot, when they glanced at[2] Guinevere,
Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,
Heard from the Baron that, ten years before,
The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.
"He learnt and warned me of their fierce design
Against my house, and him they caught and maimed;
But I, my sons, and little daughter fled
From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods
By the great river in a boatman's hut.
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke
The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill."

"O there, great lord, doubtless," Lavaine said, rapt[3]
By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth
Toward greatness in its elder, "you have fought.
O tell us—for we live apart—you know
Of Arthur's glorious wars." And Lancelot spoke
And answered him at full, as having been
With Arthur in the fight which all day long
Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;
And in the four loud battles by the shore

---

[1] *Another*. Any other man.

[2] *glanced at*. Referred to.

[3] *rapt*. Seized.

Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the war
That thundered in and out the gloomy skirts
Of Celidon the forest; and again
By Castle Gurnion, where the glorious King
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,
Carved of one emerald centered in a sun
Of silver rays, that lightened as he breathed;
And at Caerleon had he helped his lord,
When the strong neighings of the wild White Horse[1]
Set every gilded parapet shuddering;
And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,
Where many a heathen fell; "and on the mount
Of Badon I myself beheld the King
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,
And all his legions crying Christ and him,
And break them; and I saw him, after, stand
High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume
Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,
'They are broken, they are broken!' for the King,
However mild he seems at home, nor cares
For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts—
For if his own knight cast him down, he laughs
Saying, his knights are better men than he—
Yet in this heathen war the fire of God
Fills him: I never saw his like: there lives
No greater leader."

While he uttered this,
Low to her own heart said the lily maid,
"Save your great self, fair lord"; and when he fell
From talk of war to traits of pleasantry—
Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind—
She still took note that when the living smile
Died from his lips, across him came a cloud
Of melancholy severe, from which again,
Whenever in her hovering to and fro
The lily maid had striven to make him cheer,
There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness
Of manners and of nature: and she thought
That all was nature, all, perchance, for her,
And all night long his face before her lived,
As when a painter, poring on a face,
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and color of a mind and life,
Lives for his children, ever at its best
And fullest; so the face before her lived,
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
Of noble things, and held her from her sleep.
Till rathe[2] she rose, half-cheated in the thought
She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine.
First as in fear, step after step, she stole
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating:
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court,
"This shield, my friend, where is it?" and Lavaine
Passed inward, as she came from out the tower.
There to his proud horse Lancelot turned, and smoothed
The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.
Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew
Nearer and stood. He looked, and more amazed
Than if seven men had set upon him, saw
The maiden standing in the dewy light.
He had not dreamed she was so beautiful.
Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,
For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood
Rapt[3] on his face as if it were a god's.
Suddenly flashed on her a wild desire,
That he should wear her favor at the tilt.
She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.
"Fair lord, whose name I know not—noble it is,
I well believe, the noblest—will you wear
My favor at this tourney?" "Nay," said he,
"Fair lady, since I never yet have worn
Favor of any lady in the lists.

---

[1] *White Horse.* Emblem of the Saxons.

[2] *rathe.* Early.

[3] *Rapt.* Gazing intensely.

Such is my wont, as those, who know me, know."
"Yea, so," she answer'd; "then in wearing mine
Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,
That those who know should know you." And he turned
Her counsel up and down within his mind,
And found it true, and answered, "True, my child.
Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:
What is it?" and she told him, "A red sleeve
Broidered with pearls," and brought it: then he bound
Her token on his helmet, with a smile
Saying, "I never yet have done so much
For any maiden living," and the blood
Sprang to her face and filled her with delight;
But left her all the paler, when Lavaine
Returning brought the yet-unblazoned shield,
His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,
Who parted with his own to fair Elaine:
"Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield
In keeping till I come." "A grace to me,"
She answered, "twice to-day. I am your squire!"
Whereat Lavaine said, laughing, "Lily maid,
For fear our people call you lily maid
In earnest, let me bring your color back;
Once, twice, and thrice: now get you hence to bed:"
So kissed her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,
And thus they moved away: she stayed a minute,
Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there—
Her bright hair blown about the serious face
Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss—
Paused by the gateway, standing near the shield
In silence, while she watched their arms far-off
Sparkle, until they dipped below the downs.
Then to her tower she climbed, and took the shield,
There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions passed away
Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,
To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight
Not far from Camelot, now for forty years
A hermit, who had prayed, labored and prayed,
And ever laboring had scooped himself
In the white rock a chapel and a hall
Of massive columns, like a shorecliff cave,
And cells and chambers: all were fair and dry;
The green light from the meadows underneath
Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;
And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees
And poplars made a noise of falling showers.
And thither wending, there that night they bode.

But when the next day broke from underground,
And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,
They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away:
Then Lancelot saying, "Hear, but hold my name
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,"
Abashed Lavaine, whose instant reverence,
Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,
But left him leave to stammer, "Is it indeed?"
And after muttering "The great Lancelot,"
At last he got his breath and answered, "One,
One have I seen—that other, our liege lord,
The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of kings,
Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
He will be there—then were I stricken blind
That minute, I might say that I had seen."

So spake Lavaine, and when they reached the lists

By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes
Run thro' the peopled gallery which half round
Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the grass,
Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat
Robed in red samite,[1] easily to be known,
Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,
And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,
And from the carven-work behind him crept
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make
Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them
Thro' knots and loops and folds innumerable
Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they found
The new design wherein they lost themselves,
Yet with all ease, so tender was the work:
And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,
Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.

Then Lancelot answered young Lavaine and said,
"Me you call great: mine is the firmer seat,
The truer lance: but there is many a youth
Now crescent,[2] who will come to all I am
And overcome it; and in me there dwells
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch
Of greatness to know well I am not great:
There is the man." And Lavaine gaped upon him
As on a thing miraculous, and anon
The trumpets blew; and then did either side,
They that assailed, and they that held the lists,
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly move,
Meet in the midst, and there so furiously
Shock, that a man far-off might well perceive—
If any man that day were left afield—
The hard earth shake, and a low thunder of arms.
And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw
Which were the weaker; then he hurled into it
Against the stronger: little need to speak
Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke, earl,
Count, baron—whom he smote, he overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin,
Ranged with the Table Round that held the lists,
Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight
Should do and almost overdo the deeds
Of Lancelot; and one said to the other, "Lo!
What is he? I do not mean the force alone—
The grace and versatility of the man!
Is it not Lancelot?" "When has Lancelot worn
Favor of any lady in the lists?
Not such his wont, as we, that know him, know."
"How then? who then?" a fury seized them all,
A fiery family passion for the name
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.
They couched their spears and pricked their steeds, and thus,
Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind they made
In moving, all together down upon him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North-sea,
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,
And him that helms it, so they overbore
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear
Pricked sharply his own cuirass, and the head
Pierced thro' his side, and there snapped, and remained.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully;[3]
He bore a knight of old repute to the earth,
And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.
He up the side, sweating with agony, got,

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[1] *samite.* Heavy silk.
[2] *crescent.* Growing up.
[3] *worshipfully.* Honorably.

But thought to do while he might yet endure,
And being lustily holpen by the rest,
His party,—tho' it seemed half-miracle
To those he fought with,—drave his kith and kin,
And all the Table Round that held the lists,
Back to the barrier; then the trumpets blew
Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the sleeve
Of scarlet, and the pearls; and all the knights,
His party, cried "Advance and take thy prize
The diamond"; but he answer'd, "Diamond me
No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!
Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me not."

He spoke, and vanished suddenly from the field
With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.
There from his charger down he slid, and sat,
Gasping to Sir Lavaine, "Draw the lance-head:"
"Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot," said Lavaine,
"I dread me, if I draw it, you will die."
But he, "I die already with it: draw—
Draw,"—and Lavaine drew, and Sir Lancelot gave
A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,
And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank
For the pure pain, and wholly swooned away.
Then came the hermit out and bare him in,
There stanched his wound; and there, in daily doubt
Whether to live or die, for many a week
Hid from the wild world's rumor by the grove
Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,
And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,
His party, knights of utmost North and West,
Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate isles,
Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,
"Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we won the day,
Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize
Untaken, crying that his prize is death."
"Heaven hinder," said the King, "that such an one,
So great a knight as we have seen to-day—
He seemed to me another Lancelot—
Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot—
He must not pass uncared for. Wherefore, rise,
O Gawain, and ride forth and find the knight.
Wounded and wearied needs must he be near.
I charge you that you get at once to horse.
And, knights and kings, there breathes not one of you
Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given:
His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him
No customary honor: since the knight
Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,
Ourselves will send it after. Rise and take
This diamond, and deliver it, and return,
And bring us where he is, and how he fares,
And cease not from your quest until ye find."

So saying, from the carven flower above,
To which it made a restless heart, he took,
And gave, the diamond: then from where he sat
At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,
With smiling face and frowning heart, a Prince
In the mid might and flourish of his May,
Gawain, surnamed The Courteous, fair and strong,
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint
And Gareth, a good knight, but therewithal

Sir Modred's brother, and the child of Lot,
Nor often loyal to his word, and now
Wroth that the King's command to sally forth
In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave
The banquet, and concourse of knights and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and went;
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,
Passed, thinking "Is it Lancelot who hath come
Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain
Of glory, and hath added wound to wound,
And ridd'n away to die?" So feared the King,
And, after two days' tarriance there, returned.
Then when he saw the Queen, embracing asked,
"Love, are you yet so sick?" "Nay, lord," she said.
"And where is Lancelot?" Then the Queen amazed,
"Was he not with you? won he not your prize?"
"Nay, but one like him." "Why, that like was he."
And when the King demanded how she knew,
Said, "Lord, no sooner had ye parted from us,
Than Lancelot told me of a common talk
That men went down before his spear at a touch,
But knowing he was Lancelot; his great name
Conquered; and therefore would he hide his name
From all men, ev'n the King, and to this end
Had made the pretext of a hindering wound,
That he might joust unknown of all, and learn
If his old prowess were in aught decayed;
And added, 'Our true Arthur, when he learns,
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
Of purer glory.'"

Then replied the King:
"Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
To have trusted me as he hath trusted thee.
Surely his King and most familiar friend
Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed,
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
Must needs have moved my laughter: now remains
But little cause for laughter: his own kin—
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him, this!—
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him;
So that he went sore wounded from the field:
Yet good news too: for goodly hopes are mine
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm
A sleeve of scarlet, broidered with great pearls,
Some gentle maiden's gift."

"Yea, lord," she said,
"Thy hopes are mine," and saying that, she choked,
And sharply turned about to hide her face,
Passed to her chamber, and there flung herself
Down on the great King's couch, and writhed upon it,
And clenched her fingers till they bit the palm,
And shrieked out "Traitor" to the unhearing wall,
Then flashed into wild tears, and rose again,
And moved about her palace, proud and pale.

Gawain the while thro' all the region round
Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,
Touched at all points, except the poplar grove,
And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat:
Whom glittering in enamelled arms the maid
Glanced at, and cried, "What news from Camelot, lord?

What of the knight with the red sleeve?" "He won."
"I knew it," she said. "But parted from the jousts
Hurt in the side," whereat she caught her breath;
Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance go;
Thereon she smote her hand: wellnigh she swooned:
And, while he gazed wonderingly at her, came
The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the Prince
Reported who he was, and on what quest
Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find
The victor, but had ridd'n a random round
To seek him, and had wearied of the search.
To whom the Lord of Astolat, "Bide with us,
And ride no more at random, noble Prince!
Here was the knight, and here he left a shield;
This will he send or come for: furthermore
Our son is with him; we shall hear anon,
Needs must we hear." To this the courteous Prince
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,
And stayed; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine:
Where could be found face daintier? then her shape
From forehead down to foot, perfect—again
From foot to forehead exquisitely turned:
"Well—if I bide, lo! this wild flower for me!"
And oft they met among the garden yews,
And there he set himself to play upon her
With sallying wit, free flashes from a height
Above her, graces of the court, and songs,
Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden eloquence
And amorous adulation, till the maid
Rebelled against it, saying to him, "Prince,
O loyal nephew of our noble King,
Why ask you not to see the shield he left,
Whence you might learn his name? Why slight your King,
And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove
No surer than our falcon yesterday,
Who lost the hern we slipped[1] her at, and went
To all the winds?" "Nay, by mine head," said he,
"I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes;
But, an ye will it, let me see the shield."
And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw
Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crowned with gold,
Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mocked:
"Right was the King! our Lancelot! that true man!"
"And right was I," she answered merrily, "I,
Who dreamed my knight the greatest knight of all."
"And if *I* dreamed," said Gawain, "that you love
This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, ye know it!
Speak therefore: shall I waste myself in vain?"
Full simple was her answer, "What know I?
My brethren have been all my fellowship;
And I, when often they have talked of love,
Wished it had been my mother, for they talked,
Meseemed, of what they knew not; so myself—
I know not if I know what true love is,
But if I know, then, if I love not him,
I know there is none other I can love."
"Yea, by God's death," said he, "ye love him well,
But would not, knew ye what all others know,
And whom he loves." "So be it," cried Elaine,
And lifted her fair face and moved away:
But he pursued her, calling, "Stay a little!
One golden minute's grace! he wore your sleeve:
Would he break faith with one I may not name?
Must our true man change like a leaf at last?
Nay—like enow: why then, far be it from me

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[1] *slipped*. Let loose (to attack the prey).

To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!
And, damsel, for I deem you know full well
Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave
My quest with you; the diamond also: here!
For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it
From your own hand; and whether he love or not,
A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well
A thousand times!—a thousand times farewell!
Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two
May meet at court hereafter: there, I think,
So ye will learn the courtesies of the court,
We two shall know each other."

Then he gave,
And slightly kissed the hand to which he gave,
The diamond, and all wearied of the quest
Leaped on his horse, and, carolling as he went
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he passed; there told the King
What the King knew, "Sir Lancelot is the knight."
And added, "Sire, my liege, so much I learnt;
But failed to find him, tho' I rode all round
The region: but I lighted on the maid
Whose sleeve he wore; she loves him; and to her,
Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,
I gave the diamond: she will render it;
For by mine head she knows his hiding-place."

The seldom-frowning King frowned, and replied,
"Too courteous truly! ye shall go no more
On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings."

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in awe,
For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,
Lingered that other, staring after him;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzzed abroad
About the maid of Astolat, and her love.
All ears were pricked at once, all tongues were loosed:
"The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat."
Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all
Had marvel what the maid might be, but most
Predoomed[1] her as unworthy. One old dame
Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news.
She, that had heard the noise of it before,
But sorrowing Lancelot should have stooped so low,
Marred her friend's aim with pale tranquillity.
So ran the tale like fire about the court,
Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder flared:
Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice
Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid
Smiled at each other, while the Queen, who sat
With lips severely placid, felt the knot
Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen
Crushed the wild passion out against the floor
Beneath the banquet, where the meats became
As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said,
"Father, you call me wilful, and the fault
Is yours who let me have my will, and now,
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?"
"Nay," said he, "surely." "Wherefore, let me hence,"

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[1] *Predoomed.* Prejudged.

She answered, "and find out our dear Lavaine."
"Ye will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine:
Bide," answered he: "we needs must hear anon
Of him, and of that other." "Ay," she said,
"And of that other, for I needs must hence
And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,
Lest I be found as faithless in the quest
As yon proud Prince who left the quest to me.
Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid.
The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,
My father, to be sweet and serviceable
To noble knights in sickness, as ye know,
When these have worn their tokens: let me hence,
I pray you." Then her father nodding said,
"Ay, ay, the diamond: wit[1] ye well, my child,
Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,
Being our greatest: yea, and you must give it—
And sure I think this fruit is hung too high
For any mouth to gape for save a queen's—
Nay, I mean nothing: so then, get you gone,
Being so very wilful you must go."

Lightly, her suit allowed, she slipped away,
And while she made her ready for her ride,
Her father's latest word hummed in her ear,
"Being so very wilful you must go,"
And changed itself, and echoed in her heart,
"Being so very wilful you must die."
But she was happy enough and shook it off,
As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us;
And in her heart she answered it and said,
"What matter, so I helped him back to life?"
Then far away, with good Sir Torre for guide,
Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs
To Camelot, and before the city-gates
Came on her brother with a happy face
Making a roan horse caper and curvet
For pleasure all about a field of flowers:
Whom when she saw, "Lavaine," she cried, "Lavaine,
How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?" He amazed,
"Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot!
How know ye my lord's name is Lancelot?"
But when the maid had told him all her tale,
Then turned Sir Torre, and being in his moods
Left them, and under the strange-statued gate,
Where Arthur's wars were rendered mystically,
Passed up the still rich city to his kin,
His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot;
And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove
Led to the caves: there first she saw the casque
Of Lancelot on the wall: her scarlet sleeve,
Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls away,
Streamed from it still; and in her heart she laughed,
Because he had not loosed it from his helm,
But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.
And when they gained the cell wherein he slept,
His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands
Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream
Of dragging down his enemy made them move.
Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Uttered a little tender dolorous cry.
The sound not wonted in a place so still
Woke the sick knight, and while he rolled his eyes,
Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying,

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[1] *wit.* Know.

"Your prize the diamond sent you by the King:"
His eyes glistened: she fancied, "Is it for me?"
And when the maid had told him all the tale
Of King and Prince, the diamond sent, the quest
Assigned to her not worthy of it, she knelt
Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
And laid the diamond in his open hand.
Her face was near, and as we kiss the child
That does the task assigned, he kissed her face.
At once she slipped like water to the floor.
"Alas," he said, "your ride hath wearied you.
Rest must you have." "No rest for me," she said;
"Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest."
What might she mean by that? his large black eyes,
Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her,
Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself
In the heart's colors on her simple face;
And Lancelot looked, and was perplexed in mind,
And being weak in body said no more;
But did not love the color; woman's love,
Save one, he not regarded, and so turned
Sighing, and feigned a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,
And passed beneath the weirdly-sculptured gates
Far up the dim rich city to her kin;
There bode the night: but woke with dawn, and passed
Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,
Thence to the cave: so day by day she passed
In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
Gliding, and every day she tended him,
And likewise many a night: and Lancelot
Would, tho' he called his wound a little hurt
Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times
Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem
Uncourteous, even he: but the meek maid
Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him
Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,
Milder than any mother to a sick child,
And never woman yet, since man's first fall,
Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love
Upbore her; till the hermit, skilled in all
The simples and the science of that time,
Told him that her fine care had saved his life.
And the sick man forgot her simple blush,
Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,
Would listen for her coming and regret
Her parting step, and held her tenderly,
And loved her with all love except the love
Of man and woman when they love their best,
Closest and sweetest, and had died the death
In any knightly fashion for her sake.
And peradventure had he seen her first
She might have made this and that other world
Another world for the sick man; but now
The shackles of an old love straitened[1] him,
His honor rooted in dishonor stood,
And faith unfaithful[2] kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness made
Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.
These, as but born of sickness, could not live:
For when the blood ran lustier in him again,
Full often the bright image of one face,
Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.
Then if the maiden, while that ghostly grace[3]
Beamed on his fancy, spoke, he answered not,
Or short and coldly, and she knew right well
What the rough sickness meant, but what this meant
She knew not, and the sorrow dimmed her sight,
And drave her ere her time across the fields

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[1] *straitened.* Restrained.
[2] *faith unfaithful.* Disloyal loyalty.
[3] *ghostly grace.* Spirit-like beauty.

Far into the rich city, where alone
She murmured, "Vain, in vain: it cannot be.
He will not love me: how then? must I die?"
Then as a little helpless innocent bird,
That has but one plain passage of few notes,
Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er
For all an April morning, till the ear
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
Went half the night repeating, "Must I die?"
And now to right she turned, and now to left,
And found no ease in turning or in rest;
And "Him or death," she muttered, "death or him,"
Again and like a burthen,[1] "Him or death."

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole,
To Astolat returning rode the three.
There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self
In that wherein she deemed she looked her best,
She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought
"If I be loved, these are my festal robes,
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall."
And Lancelot ever pressed upon the maid
That she should ask some goodly gift of him
For her own self or hers; "and do not shun
To speak the wish most near to your true heart;
Such service have ye done me that I make
My will of yours, and Prince and Lord am I
In mine own land, and what I will I can."
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
But like a ghost without the power to speak.
And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,
And bode among them yet a little space
Till he should learn it; and one morn it chanced
He found her in among the garden yews,
And said, "Delay no longer, speak your wish,
Seeing I go to-day:" then out she brake:
"Going? and we shall never see you more.
And I must die for want of one bold word."
"Speak: that I live to hear," he said, "is yours."
Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:
"I have gone mad. I love you: let me die."
"Ah, sister," answer'd Lancelot, "what is this?"
And innocently extending her white arms,
"Your love," she said, "your love—to be your wife."
And Lancelot answered, "Had I chosen to wed,
I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine:
But now there never will be wife of mine."
"No, no," she cried, "I care not to be wife,
But to be with you still,[2] to see your face,
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world."
And Lancelot answered, "Nay, the world, the world,
All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart
To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue
To blare its own interpretation—nay,
Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,
And your good father's kindness." And she said,
"Not to be with you, not to see your face—
Alas for me then, my good days are done."
"Nay, noble maid,' he answered, "ten times nay!
This is not love: but love's first flash in youth,
Most common: yea, I know it of mine own self:
And you yourself will smile at your own self
Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life
To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age:
And then will I,—for true you are and sweet
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,—
More specially should your good knight be poor,
Endow you with broad land and territory
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,

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[1] *burthen.* Refrain.

[2] *still.* Always.

So[1] that would make you happy: furthermore,
Ev'n to the death, as tho' ye were my blood,
In all your quarrels will I be your knight.
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,
And more than this I cannot."

While he spoke
She neither blushed nor shook, but deathly-pale
Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied:
"Of all this will I nothing"; and so fell,
And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of yew
Their talk had pierced, her father: "Ay, a flash,
I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lancelot.
I pray you, use some rough discourtesy
To blunt or break her passion."

Lancelot said,
"That were against me: what I can I will";
And there that day remained, and toward even
Sent for his shield: full meekly rose the maid,
Stripped off the case, and gave the naked shield;
Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,
Unclasping flung the casement back, and looked
Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.
And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound;
And she by tact of love was well aware
That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,
Nor bad farewell, but sadly rode away.
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat:
His very shield was gone; only the case,
Her own poor work, her empty labor, left.
But still she heard him, still his picture formed
And grew between her and the pictured wall.
Then came her father, saying in low tones,
"Have comfort," whom she greeted quietly.
Then came her brethren saying, "Peace to thee,
Sweet sister," whom she answered with all calm.
But when they left her to herself again,
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field
Approaching thro' the darkness, called; the owls
Wailing had power upon her, and she mixed
Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms
Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,
And called her song "The Song of Love and Death,"
And sang it: sweetly could she make[2] and sing.

"Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain;
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain:
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be:
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

"Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away,
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"I fain would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die."

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind

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[1] *So.* If.

[2] *make.* Compose.

That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and thought
With shuddering, "Hark the Phantom of the house
That ever shrieks before a death," and called
The father, and all three in hurry and fear
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, "Let me die!"

As when we dwell upon a word we know,
Repeating, till the word we know so well
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,
So dwelt the father on her face, and thought
"Is this Elaine?" till back the maiden fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,
Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.
At last she said, "Sweet brothers, yester-night
I seemed a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,
And when ye used to take me with the flood
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape
That has the poplar on it: there ye fixed
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
And yet I cried because ye would not pass
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
Until we found the palace of the King.
And yet ye would not; but this night I dreamed
That I was all alone upon the flood,
And then I said, 'Now shall I have my will:'
And there I woke, but still the wish remained.
So let me hence that I may pass at last
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,
Until I find the palace of the King.
There will I enter in among them all,
And no man there will dare to mock at me;
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me;
Gawain, who bade a thousand farewells to me,
Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bade me one:
And there the King will know me and my love,
And there the Queen herself will pity me,
And all the gentle court will welcome me,
And after my long voyage I shall rest!"

"Peace," said her father, "O my child, ye seem
Light-headed, for what force is yours to go
So far, being sick? and wherefore would ye look
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all?"

Then the rough Torre began to heave and move,
And bluster into stormy sobs and say,
"I never loved him: an I meet with him,
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike him down,
Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,
For this discomfort he hath done the house."

To whom the gentle sister made reply,
"Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault
Not to love me, than it is mine to love
Him of all men who seems to me the highest."

"Highest?" the father answer'd, echoing "highest?"
(He meant to break the passion in her) "nay,
Daughter, I know not what you call the highest;
But this I know, for all the people know it,
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame:
And she returns his love in open shame;
If this be high, what is it to be low?"

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:
"Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I
For anger: these are slanders: never yet
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.

He makes no friend who never made a foe.
But now it is my glory to have loved
One peerless, without stain: so let me pass,
My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,
Not all unhappy, having loved God's best
And greatest, tho' my love had no return:
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,
Thanks, but you work against your own desire;
For if I could believe the things you say
I should but die the sooner; wherefore cease,
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man[1]
Hither, and let me shrive[2] me clean, and die."

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,
She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
A letter, word for word; and when he asked
"Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?
Then will I bear it gladly"; she replied,
"For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,
But I myself must bear it." Then he wrote
The letter she devised; which being writ
And folded, "O sweet father, tender and true,
Deny me not," she said—"ye never yet
Denied my fancies—this, however strange,
My latest: lay the letter in my hand
A little ere I die, and close the hand
Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.
And when the heat is gone from out my heart,
Then take the little bed on which I died
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's
For richness, and me also like the Queen
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
To take me to the river, and a barge
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
There surely I shall speak for mine own self,
And none of you can speak for me so well.
And therefore let our dumb old man alone
Go with me; he can steer and row, and he
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors."

She ceased: her father promised; whereupon
She grew so cheerful that they deemed her death
Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.
But ten slow mornings passed, and on the eleventh
Her father laid the letter in her hand,
And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
So that day there was dole[3] in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from underground,
Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows
Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
Passed like a shadow thro' the field, that shone
Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,
Palled all its length in blackest samite, lay.
There sat the lifelong creature of the house,
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
So those two brethren from the chariot took
And on the black decks laid her in her bed,
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
The silken case with braided blazonings,[4]
And kissed her quiet brows, and saying to her
"Sister, farewell for ever," and again
"Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in tears.
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,
Oared by the dumb, went upward with the flood—
In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter—all her bright hair streaming down—
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white

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[1] *ghostly man.* Priest.
[2] *shrive.* Confess.
[3] *dole.* Mourning.
[4] See line 9.

All but her face, and that clear-featured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,
With deaths of others, and almost his own,
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds: for he saw
One of her house, and sent him to the Queen
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed
With such and so unmoved a majesty
She might have seemed her statue, but that he,
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kissed her feet
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye
The shadow of some piece of pointed lace,
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,
And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel[1] on the summer side,
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream,
They met, and Lancelot kneeling uttered, "Queen,
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,
Take, what I had not won except for you,
These jewels, and make me happy, making them
An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's
Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these are words:
Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin
In speaking, yet O grant my worship of it
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in words,
Perchance, we both can pardon: but, my Queen,
I hear of rumors flying thro' your court.
Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,
Should have in it an absoluter trust
To make up that defect: let rumors be:
When did not rumors fly? these, as I trust
That you trust me in your own nobleness,
I may not well believe that you believe."

While thus he spoke, half turned away, the Queen
Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,
Till all the place whereon she stood was green;
Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive hand
Received at once and laid aside the gems
There on a table near her, and replied:

"It may be, I am quicker of belief
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.
Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,
It can be broken easier. I for you
This many a year have done despite and wrong
To one whom ever in my heart of hearts
I did acknowledge nobler. What are these?
Diamonds for me! they had been thrice their worth
Being your gift, had you not lost your own.
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!
For her! for your new fancy. Only this
Grant me, I pray you: have your joys apart.
I doubt not that, however changed, you keep
So much of what is graceful: and myself
Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy
In which as Arthur's Queen I move and rule:
So cannot speak my mind. An end to this!
A strange one! yet I take it with Amen.
So pray you, add my diamonds to her pearls;
Deck her with these; tell her, she shines me down:
An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck

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[1] *oriel.* Portico.

O as much fairer—as a faith once fair
Was richer than these diamonds—hers not mine—
Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will—
She shall not have them."

Saying which she seized,
And, thro' the casement standing wide for heat,
Flung them, and down they flashed, and smote the stream.
Then from the smitten surface flashed, as it were,
Diamonds to meet them, and they passed away.
Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half disdain
At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,
Close underneath his eyes, and right across
Where these had fallen, slowly passed the barge
Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst away
To weep and wail in secret; and the barge,
On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.
There two stood armed, and kept the door; to whom,
All up the marble stair, tier over tier,
Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes that asked
"What is it?" but that oarsman's haggard face,
As hard and still as is the face that men
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks
On some cliff-side, appalled them, and they said,
"He is enchanted, cannot speak—and she,
Look how she sleeps—the Fairy Queen, so fair!
Yea, but how pale! what are they? flesh and blood?
Or come to take the King to Fairyland?
For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,
But that he passes into Fairyland."

While thus they babbled of the King, the King
Came girt with knights: then turned the tongueless man
From the half-face to the full eye, and rose
And pointed to the damsel, and the doors.
So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid;
And reverently they bore her into hall.
Then came the fine Gawain and wondered at her,
And Lancelot later came and mused at her,
And last the Queen herself, and pitied her:
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
Stooped, took, brake seal, and read it; this was all:

"Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
I, sometime called the maid of Astolat,
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
I loved you, and my love had no return,
And therefore my true love has been my death.
And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,
And to all other ladies, I make moan:
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
As thou art a knight peerless."

Thus he read;
And ever in the reading, lords and dames
Wept, looking often from his face who read
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
So touched were they, half-thinking that her lips,
Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all:
"My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
Know that for this most gentle maiden's death
Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,
But loved me with a love beyond all love
In women, whomsoever I have known.
Yet to be loved makes not to love again;
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.
I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave
No cause, not willingly, for such a love:
To this I call my friends in testimony,

Her brethren, and her father, who himself
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,
To break her passion, some discourtesy
Against my nature: what I could, I did.
I left her and I bade her no farewell;
Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have died,
I might have put my wits to some rough use,
And helped her from herself."

Then said the Queen
(Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm)
"Ye might at least have done her so much grace,
Fair lord, as would have helped her from her death."
He raised his head, their eyes met, and hers fell,
He adding:

"Queen, she would not be content
Save that I wedded her, which could not be.
Then might she follow me thro' the world, she asked;
It could not be. I told her that her love
Was but the flash of youth, would darken down
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
Toward one more worthy of her—then would I,
More specially were he she wedded poor,
Estate them with large land and territory
In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,
To keep them in all joyance: more than this
I could not; this she would not, and she died."

He pausing, Arthur answered, "O my knight,
It will be to thy worship,[1] as my knight,
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,
To see that she be buried worshipfully."

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went
The marshalled Order of their Table Round,
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,
And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.
And when the knights had laid her comely head
Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,
Then Arthur spake among them, "Let her tomb
Be costly, and her image thereupon,
And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.
And let the story of her dolorous voyage
For all true hearts be blazoned on her tomb
In letters gold and azure!" which was wrought
Thereafter; but when now the lords and dames
And people, from the high door streaming, brake
Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,
Who marked Sir Lancelot where he moved apart,
Drew near, and sighed in passing, "Lancelot,
Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love."
He answered, with his eyes upon the ground,
"That is love's curse; pass on, my Queen, forgiven."
But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,
Approached him, and with full affection said,

"Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have
Most joy and most affiance,[2] for I know
What thou hast been in battle by my side,
And many a time have watched thee at the tilt
Strike down the lusty and long-practised knight,
And let the younger and unskilled go by
To win his honor and to make his name,
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man
Made to be loved; but now I would to God,
Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes,
Thou couldst have loved this maiden, shaped, it seems,
By God for thee alone, and from her face,
If one may judge the living by the dead,
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
Who might have brought thee, now a lonely man
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons

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[1] *worship.* Honor.

[2] *affiance.* Confidence.

Born to the glory of thy name and fame,
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the Lake."

Then answered Lancelot: "Fair she was, my King,
Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.
To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,
To doubt her pureness were to want a heart—
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love
Could bind him, but free love will not be bound."

"Free love, so bound, were freest," said the King.
"Let love be free; free love is for the best:
And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,
What should be best, if not so pure a love
Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee
She failed to bind, tho' being, as I think,
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know."

And Lancelot answered nothing, but he went,
And at the inrunning of a little brook
Sat by the river in a cove, and watched
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
And saw the barge that brought her moving down,
Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said
Low in himself: "Ah, simple heart and sweet,
Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul?
Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at last—
Farewell, fair lily. 'Jealousy in love?'
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride?
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,
May not your crescent[1] fear for name and fame
Speak, as it waxes,[2] of a love that wanes?
Why did the King dwell on my name to me?
Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,
Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake
Caught from his mother's arms—the wondrous one
Who passes thro' the vision of the night—
She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns
Heard on the winding waters; eve and morn
She kissed me, saying, 'Thou art fair, my child,
As a king's son,' and often in her arms
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.[3]
Would she had drowned me in it, where'er it be!
For what am I? what profits me my name
Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and have it:
Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;
Now grown a part of me: but what use in it?
To make men worse by making my sin known?
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must break
These bonds that so defame me: not without
She wills it: would I, if she willed it? nay,
Who knows? but if I would not, then may God,
I pray him, send a sudden Angel down
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,
And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,
Among the tumbled fragments of the hills."

So groaned Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man.

(1859)

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

ALFRED TENNYSON

[This is the conclusion of the *Idylls of the King;* for the significance, see the note at the beginning of *Gareth and Lynette.* Lancelot had fled from Arthur's court to his own land, because of his guilt, and the wicked knight Modred had usurped the kingdom while Arthur was in pursuit.]

That story which the bold Sir Bedivere,
First made and latest left of all the knights,

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[1] *crescent.* Growing.

[2] *waxes.* Increases.

[3] *mere.* Lake.

Told, when the man was no more than a voice
In the white winter of his age, to those
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other minds.

For on their march to westward, Bedivere,
Who slowly paced among the slumbering host,
Heard in his tent the moanings of the King:

"I found Him in the shining of the stars,
I marked Him in the flowering of His fields,
But in his ways with men I find Him not.
I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.
O me! for why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the world,
But had not force to shape it as he would,
Till the High God behold it from beyond,
And enter it, and make it beautiful?
Or else as if the world were wholly fair,
But that these eyes of men are dense and dim,
And have not power to see it as it is:
Perchance, because we see not to the close;—
For I, being simple,[1] thought to work His will,
And have but stricken with the sword in vain;
And all whereon I leaned in wife and friend
Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm
Reels back into the beast,[2] and is no more.
My God, thou hast forgotten me in my death:
Nay—God my Christ—I pass but shall not die."

Then, ere that last weird battle in the west,
There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain killed
In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain blown
Along a wandering wind, and past his ear
Went shrilling, "Hollow, hollow all delight!
Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass away.
Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee.
And I am blown along a wandering wind,
And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight."
And fainter onward, like wild birds that change
Their season in the night and wail their way
From cloud to cloud, down the long wind the dream
Shrilled; but in going mingled with dim cries
Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,
As of some lonely city sacked by night,
When all is lost, and wife and child with wail
Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and called,
"Who spake? A dream. O light[3] upon the wind,
Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are these dim cries
Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste and wild
Mourn, knowing it will go along with me?"

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and spake:
"O me, my King, let pass whatever will,
Elves, and the harmless glamour of the field;
But in their stead thy name and glory cling
To all high places like a golden cloud
For ever: but as yet thou shalt not pass.
Light was Gawain in life, and light in death
Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;
And care not thou for dreams from him, but rise—
I hear the steps of Modred in the west,
And with him many of thy people, and knights
Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but grosser grown
Than heathen, spitting at their vows and thee.
Right well in heart they know thee for the King.
Arise, go forth and conquer as of old."

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Far other is this battle in the west
Whereto we move, than when we strove in youth,

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[1] *simple.* Foolish.
[2] *the beast.* Primitive evil and violence.
[3] *light.* Cf. line 56.

And brake the petty kings, and fought with Rome,
Or thrust the heathen from the Roman wall,
And shook him thro' the north. Ill doom is mine
To war against my people and my knights.
The king who fights his people fights himself.
And they my knights, who loved me once, the stroke
That strikes them dead is as my death to me.
Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way
Thro' this blind haze, which ever since I saw
One lying in the dust at Almesbury,[1]
Hath folded in the passes of the world."

Then rose the King and moved his host by night,
And ever pushed Sir Modred, league by league,
Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse[2]—
A land of old upheaven from the abyss
By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,
And the long mountains ended in a coast
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
There the pursuer could pursue no more,
And he that fled no further fly the King;
And there, that day when the great light of heaven
Burned at his lowest in the rolling year,
On the waste sand by the waste sea they closed.
Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.
A deathwhite mist slept over sand and sea:
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew
Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
With formless fear; and ev'n on Arthur fell
Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought.
For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
And friend slew friend, not knowing whom he slew;
And some had visions out of golden youth,
And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
Look in upon the battle; and in the mist
Was many a noble deed, many a base,
And chance and craft and strength in single fights,
And ever and anon with host to host
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn,
Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash
Of battleaxes on shattered helms, and shrieks
After the Christ, of those who falling down
Looked up for heaven, and only saw the mist;
And shouts of heathen and the traitor knights,
Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,
Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of the lungs
In that close mist, and cryings for the light,
Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed after wail
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death
Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that shore,
Save for some whisper of the seething seas,
A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous day
Grew drearier toward twilight falling, came
A bitter wind, clear from the North, and blew
The mist aside, and with that wind the tide
Rose, and the pale King glanced across the field
Of battle: but no man was moving there;
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,

---

[1] His wife Guinevere, in a convent at Almesbury, where she had prostrated herself before him in penitence.

[2] *Lyonesse.* The extreme southwestern portion of Britain.

And shivered brands that once had fought with Rome,
And rolling far along the gloomy shores
The voice of days of old and days to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,
And whiter than the mist that all day long
Had held the field of battle was the King:

"Hearest thou this great voice that shakes the world,
And wastes the narrow realm whereon we move,
And beats upon the faces of the dead,
My dead, as tho' they had not died for me?—
O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fall'n
Confusion, till I know not what I am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be King.
Behold, I seem but King among the dead."

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere: "My King,
King everywhere! and so the dead have kings,
There also will I worship[1] thee as King.
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live
Who love thee; but who hates thee, he that brought
The heathen back among us, yonder stands,
Modred, unharmed, the traitor of mine house."

Then spake the King: "My house hath been my doom,
But call not thou this traitor of my house
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with me.
My house are rather they who sware my vows,
Yea, even while they brake them, owned me King.
And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,
When all the purport of my throne hath failed,
That quick[2] or dead thou holdest me for King.
King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see
Yet, ere I pass." And uttering this the King
Made at the man: then Modred smote his liege
Hard on that helm which many a heathen sword
Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,
Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
Slew him, and all but slain himself, he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their lord,
King Arthur. Then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him.
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait[3] of barren land:
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more; but, let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand[4] Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,

---

[1] *worship.* Honor.
[2] *quick.* Alive.
[3] *strait.* Isthmus.
[4] *brand.* Sword.

Clothed in white samite,[1] mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I rowed across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:[2]
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm—
A little thing may harm a wounded man;
Yet I thy hest[3] will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruined shrine he stepped,
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seemed
Better to leave Excalibur concealed
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou performed my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
"Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseemed
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had followed, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,
As thou art lief[4] and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud:

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? Deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand

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[1] *samite.* Silk.
[2] *mere.* Lake.
[3] *hest.* Command.
[4] *lief.* Beloved.

An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and shows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? But were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,[1]
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widowed of the power in his eye
That bowed the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutched the sword,
And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirled in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,[2]
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the Northern Sea.
So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipped the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Nor tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I looked again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:

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[1] *conceit.* Thought.

[2] *northern morn.* Aurora Borealis.

"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin;[1] yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words;
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sighed the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walked,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armèd heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms,
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold: and from them rose
A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmured Arthur, "Place me in the barge."
So to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shattered casque, and chafed his hands,
And called him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against a brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the withered moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses[2] dashed with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the daïs-throne — were parched with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shattered column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?

---

[1] *margin.* Shore.

[2] *cuisses.* Thigh-armor.

Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders[1] with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world,
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)—
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

But when that moan had passed for evermore,
The stillness of the dead world's winter dawn
Amazed him, and he groaned, "The King is gone."
And therewithal came on him the weird rhyme,
"From the great deep to the great deep he goes."[2]

Whereat he slowly turned and slowly clomb
The last hard footstep of that iron crag;
Thence marked the black hull moving yet, and cried,
"He passes to be King among the dead,
And after healing of his grievous wound
He comes again; but—if he come no more—
O me, be yon dark Queens in yon black boat,
Who shrieked and wailed, the three whereat we gazed
On that high day, when, clothed with living light,
They stood before his throne in silence, friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need?"

Then from the dawn it seemed there came, but faint
As from beyond the limit of the world,

---

[1] *Elders.* Wise men (of the Nativity).

[2] A riddle uttered by Merlin the magician, regarding Arthur's birth.

Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about, and clomb
Ev'n to the highest he could climb, and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the King,
Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
From less to less and vanish into light.
And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

(1842, 1870)

break in center of action and peculiar type
vigorous rhythm of

HERVÉ RIEL

ROBERT BROWNING

[Cape La Hogue, St. Malò, and the Rance River lie on the northern coast of France. Here the British and Dutch allies defeated the fleet of Louis XIV, but a Breton sailor of Croisic, Hervé Riel (pronounced Re-el'), piloted a good number of the fleeing vessels to safety in the roadstead at St. Malo.]

On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninety-two,
Did the English fight the French,—woe to France!
And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter through the blue,
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks pursue,
Came crowding ship on ship to Saint Malo on the Rance,
With the English fleet in view.

'Twas the squadron that escaped, with the victor in full chase;
First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship, Damfreville;
Close on him fled, great and small,
Twenty-two good ships in all;
And they signalled to the place
"Help the winners of a race!
Get us guidance, give us harbor, take us quick—or, quicker still,
Here's the English can and will!"

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leaped on board;
"Why what hope or chance have ships like these to pass?" laughed they:
"Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage scarred and scored,
Shall the *Formidable* here with her twelve and eighty guns
Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow way,
Trust to enter where 'tis ticklish for a craft of twenty tons,
And with flow[1] at full beside?
Now, 'tis slackest ebb of tide.
Reach the mooring? Rather say,
While rock stands or water runs,
Not a ship will leave the bay!"

Then was called a council straight.
Brief and bitter the debate:
"Here's the English at our heels; would you have them take in tow
All that's left us of the fleet, linked together stern and bow,
For a prize to Plymouth Sound?
Better run the ships aground!
(Ended Damfreville his speech).
"Not a minute more to wait!
Let the Captains all and each
Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the beach!
France must undergo her fate.

"Give the word!" But no such word
Was ever spoke or heard:
For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all these
—A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate—first, second, third?
No such man of mark, and meet
With his betters to compete!
But a simple Breton sailor pressed[2] by Tourville for the fleet,
A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.

And "What mockery or malice have we here?" cried Hervé Riel:
"Are you mad, you Malouins? Are you cowards, fools, or rogues?
Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the soundings, tell
On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell,
'Twixt the offing here and Grève where the river disembogues?[3]

---

[1] *flow.* The incoming tide.
[2] *pressed.* Drafted.
[3] *disembogues.* Empties.

ellipsis in drama
phrases very characteristic

Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying's for?
Morn and eve, night and day,
Have I piloted your bay,
Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor.
Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse than fifty Hogues!
Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe me there's a way!
Only let me lead the line,
Have the biggest ship to steer,
Get this *Formidable* clear,
Make the others follow mine,
And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I know well,
Right to Solidor past Grève,
And there lay them safe and sound:
And if one ship misbehave,
—Keel so much as grate the ground,
Why I've nothing but my life,—here's my head!" cries Hervé Riel.

Not a minute more to wait.
"Steer us in, then, small and great!
Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron!" cried its chief.
Captains, give the sailor place!
He is Admiral, in brief.
Still the north-wind, by God's grace!
See the noble fellow's face
As the big ship, with a bound,
Clears the entry like a hound,
Keeps the passage as its inch of way were the wide sea's profound!
See, safe through shoal and rock,
How they follow in a flock,
Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the ground,
Not a spar that comes to grief!
The peril, see, is past,
All are harbored to the last,
And just as Hervé Riel hollas "Anchor!"—sure as fate,
Up the English come—too late!

So, the storm subsides to calm:
They see the green trees wave
On the heights o'erlooking Grève.
Hearts that bled are stanched with balm.
"Just our rapture to enhance,
Let the English rake the bay,
Gnash their teeth and glare askance
As they cannonade away!
'Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding on the Rance!"
How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's countenance:
Out burst all with one accord,
"This is Paradise for Hell!
Let France, let France's King
Thank the man that did the thing!"
What a shout, and all one word,
"Hervé Riel!"
As he stepped in front once more,
Not a symptom of surprise
In the frank blue Breton eyes,
Just the same man as before.

Then said Damfreville, "My friend,
I must speak out at the end,
Though I find the speaking hard.
Praise is deeper than the lips:
You have saved the King his ships,
You must name your own reward.
'Faith, our sun was near eclipse!
Demand whate'er you will,
France remains your debtor still.
Ask to heart's content and have! or my name's not Damfreville."

Then a beam of fun outbroke
On the bearded mouth that spoke,
As the honest heart laughed through
Those frank eyes of Breton blue:
"Since I needs must say my say,
Since on board the duty's done,
And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what is it but a run?—
Since 'tis ask and have, I may—
Since the others go ashore—
Come! A good whole holiday!
Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the Belle Aurore!"
That he asked and that he got,—nothing more.

personality

Name and deed alike are lost:
Not a pillar nor a post
In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell;
Not a head in white and black
On a single fishing-smack,
In memory of the man but for whom had gone to wrack
All that France saved from the fight whence England bore the bell.[2]

---

[1] *rampired.* Fortified.
[2] *bore the bell.* Came off leader (victor).

Go to Paris: rank on rank
Search the heroes flung pell-mell
On the Louvre, face and flank![1]
You shall look long enough ere you come to Hervé Riel.
So, for better and for worse,
Hervé Riel, accept my verse,
In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more
Save the squadron, honor France, love thy wife, the Belle Aurore!

(1871)

fine heroic poetry

THE REVENGE

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

ALFRED TENNYSON

[In August, 1591, a fleet of English warships lay at Flores, one of the islands of the Azores, to intercept Spanish treasure-galleons coming from the West Indies. The fifty-three vessels of the poem were sent from Spain to meet and escort the treasure-ships. The ballad is supposed to be spoken by one of the crew of Grenville's ship, the *Revenge*.]

At Flores in the Azores[2] Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a fluttered bird, came flying from far away;
"Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-three!"
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard: "'Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line;[3] can we fight with fifty-three?"

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: "I know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.
But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain."

So Lord Howard passed away with five ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below:
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blessed him in their pain, that they were not left to Spain,
To the thumb-screw and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
"Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!
There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set."
And Sir Richard said again: "We be all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the devil,
For I never turned my back upon Don[4] or devil yet."

Sir Richard spoke and he laughed, and we roared a hurrah, and so
The little *Revenge* ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left were seen,
And the little *Revenge* ran on thro' the long sea-lane between.

Thousands of their soldiers looked down from their decks and laughed,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delayed
By their mountain-like *San Philip* that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stayed.

And while now the great *San Philip* hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,

---

[1] The Louvre Palace is adorned with statues of distinguished Frenchmen.

[2] *Azores.* Here pronounced "Azo′-res," riming with "Flores."

[3] *ships of the line.* Battleships.

[4] *Don.* Spaniard.

Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

But anon the great *San Philip*, she bethought herself and went,
Having that within her womb that had left her ill content;
And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-thunder and flame:
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shattered, and so could fight us no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world before?

For he said, "Fight on! fight on!"
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be dressed he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the head,
And he said, "Fight on! fight on!"

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far over the summer sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for they feared that we still could sting,
So they watched what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maimed for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife:
And the sick men down in the hold were most of them stark and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder was all of it spent;
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride:
"We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die—does it matter when?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink her, split her in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain!"

And the gunner said, "Ay, ay," but the sea-men made reply:
"We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let us go;
We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow."
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the foe.

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:
"I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do.
With a joyful spirit I, Sir Richard Grenville, die!"
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honor down into the deep.
And they manned the *Revenge* with a swarthier alien crew,
And away she sailed with her loss, and longed for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had ruined awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to moan,
And or[1] ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their masts and their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-shattered navy of Spain,
And the little *Revenge* herself went down by the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

(1878)

A BALLAD OF THE FRENCH FLEET

October, 1746

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

[The poem relates to the war between England and France, 1744-48. The American colonists having captured Louisburg, one of the important Canadian fortresses, the French fitted out a fleet to retake it. The speaker in the poem is Thomas Prince, minister of the Old South Church in Boston.]

A fleet with flags arrayed
Sailed from the port of Brest,
And the Admiral's ship displayed
The signal: "Steer southwest."
For this Admiral D'Anville[2]
Had sworn by cross and crown
To ravage with fire and steel
Our helpless Boston town.

There were rumors in the street,
In the houses there was fear
Of the coming of the fleet,
And the danger hovering near.
And while from mouth to mouth
Spread the tidings of dismay,
I stood in the Old South,
Saying humbly: "Let us pray!

"O Lord! we would not advise;
But if in thy Providence
A tempest should arise
To drive the French fleet hence,
And scatter it far and wide,
Or sink it in the sea,
We should be satisfied,
And thine the glory be."

This was the prayer I made,
For my soul was all on flame;
And even as I prayed
The answering tempest came;
It came with a mighty power,
Shaking the windows and walls,
And tolling the bell in the tower
As it tolls at funerals.

The lightning suddenly
Unsheathed its flaming sword,
And I cried: "Stand still, and see
The salvation of the Lord!"
The heavens were black with cloud,
The sea was white with hail,
And ever more fierce and loud
Blew the October gale.

The fleet it overtook,
And the broad sails in the van
Like the tents of Cushan shook,
Or the curtains of Midian.[3]
Down on the reeling decks
Crashed the o'erwhelming seas;
Ah, never were there wrecks
So pitiful as these!

Like a potter's vessel broke
The great ships of the line;[4]
They were carried away as a smoke,
Or sank like lead in the brine.
O Lord! before thy path
They vanished and ceased to be,
When thou didst walk in wrath
With thine horses through the sea!

(1878)

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[1] *or.* Ere.
[2] *D'Anville.* Pronounce "Don-veel."
[3] *Cushan . . . Midian.* Desert tribes of Old Testament times.
[4] *Ships of the line.* Warships.

Modern emphasis is the personal & human. Greece treats it

Browning has humanized the character

PHEIDIPPIDES

Best work

ROBERT BROWNING

Over

[This poem tells the story of a Greek tradition of one of the greatest of Athenian runners. When, in 490 B.C., Darius of Persia sent a great host against Athens, Pheidippides was despatched to Sparta to ask for aid. Owing to Spartan jealousy he was unsuccessful, but brought back a promise of aid from the god Pan, whom the Athenians had not been in the habit of worshipping. There followed the battle of Marathon, when the Persians were driven into the sea. The poem opens with Pheidippides's salutation of the gods of his country, immediately on his return from Sparta.]

"First I salute this soil of the blessed, river and rock!
Gods of my birthplace, dæmons and heroes, honor to all!
Then I name thee, claim thee for our patron, co-equal in praise
—Ay, with Zeus the Defender, with Her of the ægis and spear![1]
Also, ye of the bow and the buskin,[2] praised be your peer,
Now, henceforth and forever,—O latest to whom I upraise
Hand and heart and voice! For Athens, leave pasture and flock!
Present to help, potent to save, Pan—patron I call!

"Archons[3] of Athens, topped by the tettix,[4] see, I return!
See, 'tis myself here standing alive, no spectre that speaks!
Crowned with the myrtle, did you command me, Athens and you,
'Run, Pheidippides, run and race, reach Sparta for aid!
Persia has come, we are here, where is She?' Your command I obeyed,
Ran and raced: like stubble, some field which a fire runs through,
Was the space between city and city: two days, two nights did I burn
Over the hills, under the dales, down pits and up peaks.

"Into their midst I broke: breath served but for 'Persia has come!
Persia bids Athens proffer slaves'-tribute, water and earth;
Razed to the ground is Eretria—but Athens, shall Athens sink,
Drop into dust and die—the flower of Hellas utterly die,
Die, with the wide world spitting at Sparta, the stupid, the stander-by?
Answer me quick, what help, what hand do you stretch o'er destruction's brink?
How,—when? No care for my limbs!—there's lightning in all and some—
Fresh and fit your message to bear, once lips give it birth!'

"O my Athens—Sparta love thee? Did Sparta respond?
Every face of her leered in a furrow of envy, mistrust,
Malice,—each eye of her gave me its glitter of gratified hate!
Gravely they turned to take counsel, to cast for excuses. I stood
Quivering,—the limbs of me fretting as fire frets, an inch from dry wood:
'Persia has come, Athens asks aid, and still they debate?
Thunder, thou Zeus! Athene, are Spartans a quarry[5] beyond
Swing of thy spear? Phœbus and Artemis, clang them "Ye must!"

"No bolt[6] launched from Olympus! Lo, their answer at last!
'Has Persia come,—does Athens ask aid,—may Sparta befriend?
Nowise precipitate judgment—too weighty the issue at stake!
Count we no time lost time which lags through respect to the gods!
Ponder that precept of old, "No warfare, whatever the odds
In your favor, so long as the moon, half-orbed, is unable to take
Full-circle her state in the sky!" Already she rounds to it fast:
Athens must wait, patient as we—who judgment suspend.'

---

[1] *Her of the ægis and spear.* The goddess Pallas Athene, patroness of Athens.
[2] *Ye of the bow and the buskin.* Phœbus Apollo and Artemis (cf. line 32). What follows (lines 5-8) is explained by the story of Pheidippides's meeting with the god Pan, lines 70-80.
[3] *Archons.* The chief Athenian officials. [4] *tettix.* A metal ornament, in the shape of a cicada.
[5] *quarry.* Hunter's game. [6] *bolt.* Zeus's thunderbolt.

Have Gods supernatural — Pan's going fighting
occasions actions are epic

“Athens,—except for that sparkle,—thy name, I had mouldered to ash!
That sent a blaze through my blood; off, off and away was I back,
—Not one word to waste, one look to lose on the false and the vile!
Yet ‘O gods of my land!’ I cried, as each hillock and plain,
Wood and stream, I knew, I named, rushing past them again,
‘Have ye kept faith, proved mindful of honors we paid you erewhile?
Vain was the filleted victim,[1] the fulsome libation! Too rash
Love in its choice, paid you so largely service so slack!’[2]

“‘Oak and olive and bay,—I bid you cease to enwreathe
Brows made bold by your leaf! Fade at the Persian’s foot,
You that, our patrons were pledged, should never adorn a slave!
Rather I hail thee, Parnes,[3]—trust to thy wild waste tract!
Treeless, herbless, lifeless mountain! What matter if slacked
My speed may hardly be, for homage to crag and to cave
No deity deigns to drape with verdure? at least I can breathe,
Fear in thee no fraud from the blind, no lie from the mute!’

“Such my cry as, rapid, I ran over Parnes’ ridge;
Gully and gap I clambered and cleared till, sudden, a bar
Jutted, a stoppage of stone against me, blocking the way.
Right! for I minded the hollow to traverse, the fissure across:
‘Where I could enter, there I depart by! Night in the fosse?[4]
Athens to aid? Though the dive were through Erebos,[5] thus I obey—
Out of the day dive, into the day as bravely arise! No bridge
Better!’—when—ha! what was it I came on, of wonders that are?

“There, in the cool of a cleft, sat he—majestical Pan!
Ivy drooped wanton, kissed his head, moss cushioned his hoof:
All the great god was good in the eyes grave-kindly—the curl
Carved on the bearded cheek, amused at a mortal’s awe,
As, under the human trunk, the goat-thighs grand I saw.
‘Halt, Pheidippides!’—halt I did, my brain of a whirl:
‘Hither to me! Why pale in my presence?’ he gracious began:
‘How is it,—Athens, only in Hellas,[6] holds me aloof?

“‘Athens, she only, rears me no fane,[7] makes me no feast!
Wherefore? Than I what godship to Athens more helpful of old?
Ay, and still, and forever her friend! Test Pan, trust me!
Go, bid Athens take heart, laugh Persia to scorn, have faith
In the temples and tombs! Go, say to Athens, “The Goat-God saith:
When Persia—so much as strews not the soil—is cast in the sea,
Then praise Pan who fought in the ranks with your most and least,
Goat-thigh to greaved[8]-thigh, made one cause with the free and the bold!”

“‘Say Pan saith: “Let this, foreshadowing the place, be the pledge!’”
(Gay, the liberal hand held out this herbage I bear
—Fennel—I grasped it a-tremble with dew—whatever it bode)
‘While, as for thee’ . . . But enough! He was gone. If I ran hitherto—
Be sure that, the rest of my journey, I ran no longer, but flew.
Parnes to Athens—earth no more, the air was my road:
Here am I back. Praise Pan, we stand no more on the razor’s edge!
Pan for Athens, Pan for me! I too have a guerdon[9] rare!”

---

[1] *filleted victim.* The ribbon-decked sacrifice.
[2] *service so slack.* That is, if you have not protected Athens.
[3] *Parnes.* Mountains near Sparta. [4] *fosse.* Hollow.
[5] *Erebos.* The region of darkness under the earth.
[6] *only in Hellas.* Alone of Greek cities.
[7] *fane.* Temple. [8] *greaved.* Armored. [9] *guerdon.* Reward.

Then spoke Miltiades. "And thee, best runner of Greece,
Whose limbs did duty indeed,—what gift is promised thyself?
Tell it us straightway,—Athens the mother demands of her son!"
Rosily blushed the youth: he paused: but, lifting at length
His eyes from the ground, it seemed as he gathered the rest of his strength
Into the utterance—"Pan spoke thus: 'For what thou hast done
Count on a worthy reward! Henceforth be allowed thee release
From the racer's toil, no vulgar reward in praise or in pelf!'[1]

"I am bold to believe, Pan means reward the most to my mind!
Fight I shall, with our foremost, wherever this fennel may grow,—
Pound—Pan helping us—Persia to dust, and under the deep
Whelm her away forever; and then—no Athens to save—
Marry a certain maid, I know keeps faith to the brave,—
Hie to my house and home: and, when my children shall creep
Close to my knees,—recount how the god was awful yet kind,
Promised their sire reward to the full—rewarding him—so!"

Unforeseeing one! Yes, he fought on the Marathon day:
So, when Persia was dust, all cried "To Akropolis!
Run, Pheidippides, one race more! the meed[2] is thy due!
'Athens is saved, thank Pan,' go shout!" He flung down his shield,
Ran like fire once more: and the space 'twixt the fennel-field
And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire runs through.
Till in he broke: "Rejoice, we conquer!" Like wine through clay,
Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he died—the bliss!

So, to this day, when friend meets friend, the word of salute
Is still "Rejoice!"—his word which brought rejoicing indeed.
So is Pheidippides happy forever,—the noble strong man
Who could race like a god, bear the face of a god, whom a god loved so well;
He saw the land saved he had helped to save, and was suffered to tell
Such tidings, yet never decline,[3] but gloriously as he began,
So to end gloriously—once to shout, thereafter be mute:
"Athens is saved!"—Pheidippides dies in the shout, for his meed.

(1879)

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[1] *pelf.* Goods.

[2] *meed.* Reward.

[3] *decline.* Weaken.

THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE AT BALACLAVA

October 25, 1854

ALFRED TENNYSON

[For the historical basis of this poem, see the note on "The Charge of the Light Brigade," page 119 above.]

The charge of the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade!
Down the hill, down the hill, thousands of Russians,
Thousands of horsemen, drew to the valley—and stayed;
For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hundred were riding by
When the points of the Russian lances arose in the sky;
And he called "Left wheel into line!" and they wheeled and obeyed.
Then he looked at the host that had halted he knew not why,
And he turned half round, and he bade his trumpeter sound
To the charge, and he rode on ahead, as he waved his blade
To the gallant three hundred whose glory will never die—
"Follow," and up the hill, up the hill, up the hill,
Followed the Heavy Brigade.

The trumpet, the gallop, the charge, and the might of the fight!
Thousands of horsemen had gathered there on the height,
With a wing pushed out to the left and a wing to the right,
And who shall escape if they close? But he dashed up alone
Through the great gray slope of men,
Swayed his sabre, and held his own
Like an Englishman there and then;
All in a moment followed with force
Three that were next in their fiery course,
Wedged themselves in between horse and horse,
Fought for their lives in the narrow gap they had made—
Four amid thousands! and up the hill, up the hill,
Galloped the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade.

Fell like a cannonshot,
Burst like a thunderbolt,
Crashed like a hurricane,
Broke through the mass from below,
Drove through the midst of the foe,
Plunged up and down, to and fro,
Rode flashing blow upon blow,
Brave Inniskillens and Greys,
Whirling their sabres in circles of light!
And some of us, all in amaze,
Who were held for a while from the fight,
And were only standing at gaze,
When the dark-muffled Russian crowd
Folded its wings from the left and the right,
And rolled them around like a cloud,—
O mad for the charge and the battle were we,
When our own good redcoats sank from sight,
Like drops of blood in a dark-gray sea,
And we turned to each other, whispering, all dismayed,
"Lost are the gallant three hundred of Scarlett's Brigade!"

"Lost one and all" were the words
Muttered in our dismay;
But they rode like victors and lords
Through the forest of lances and swords
In the heart of the Russian hordes,
They rode, or they stood at bay—
Struck with the sword-hand and slew,
Down with the bridle-hand drew
The foe from the saddle and threw
Underfoot there in the fray—
Ranged like a storm or stood like a rock
In the wave of a stormy day;
Till suddenly shock upon shock
Staggered the mass from without,
Drove it in wild disarray,
For our men galloped up with a cheer and a shout,
And the foemen surged, and wavered, and reeled
Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill, out of the field,
And over the brow and away.

Glory to each and to all, and the charge that they made!
Glory to all the three hundred, and all the Brigade!

(1881)

THE WHITE SHIP

Henry I of England—25th November, 1120

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

[Henry I had taken his only son to Normandy, that the Prince might be acknowledged his successor to the Dukedom. On the return voyage the vessel in which the Prince was sailing struck a rock at the mouth of the harbor and sank. Rossetti represents the story as being told in the manner of an old ballad, years after the occurrence, by the sole survivor of the shipwreck; thus he uses a kind of ballad refrain. Twenty-three stanzas are omitted after line 151.]

By none but me can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold.
(*Lands are swayed by a king on a throne.*)
'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,
Yet the tale can be told by none but me.
(*The sea hath no king but God alone.*)

King Henry held it as life's whole gain
That after his death his son should reign.

'Twas so in my youth I heard men say,
And my old age calls it back to-day.

King Henry of England's realm was he,
And Henry Duke of Normandy.

The times had changed when on either coast
"Clerkly Harry" was all his boast.

Of ruthless strokes full many a one
He had struck to crown himself and his son;
And his elder brother's eyes were gone.

And when to the chase his court would crowd,
The poor flung ploughshares on his road,
And shrieked: "Our cry is from King to God!"

But all the chiefs of the English land
Had knelt and kissed the Prince's hand.

And next with his son he sailed to France
To claim the Norman allegiance:

And every baron in Normandy
Had taken the oath of fealty.

'Twas sworn and sealed, and the day had come
When the King and the Prince might journey home:

For Christmas cheer is to home hearts dear,
And Christmas now was drawing near.

Stout Fitz-Stephen came to the king,—
A pilot famous in seafaring;

And he held to the King, in all men's sight,
A mark of gold for his tribute's right.

"Liege lord! my father guided the ship
From whose boat your father's foot did slip
When he caught the English soil in his grip,

"And cried: 'By this clasp I claim command
O'er every rood of English land.'

"He was borne to the realm you rule o'er now
In that ship with the archer carved at her prow:

"And thither I'll bear, an it be my due,
Your father's son and his grandson too.

"The famed White Ship is mine in the bay;
From Harfleur's harbor she sails to-day,

"With masts fair-pennoned as Norman spears,
And with fifty well-tried mariners."

Quoth the King: "My ships are chosen each one,
But I'll not say nay to Stephen's son.

"My son and daughter and fellowship
Shall cross the water in the White Ship."

The king set sail with the eve's south wind,
And soon he left that coast behind.

The Prince and all his, a princely show,
Remained in the good White Ship to go.

With noble knights and with ladies fair,
With courtiers and sailors gathered there,
Three hundred living souls we were;

And I Berold was the meanest hind[1]
In all that train to the Prince assigned.

The Prince was a lawless, shameless youth;
From his father's loins he sprang without ruth;[2]

Eighteen years till then he had seen,
And the devil's dues in him were eighteen.

And now he cried: "Bring wine from below;
Let the sailors revel ere yet they row:

"Our speed shall o'ertake my father's flight
Though we sail from the harbor at midnight."

The rowers made good cheer without check;
The lords and ladies obeyed his beck;
The night was light, and they danced on the deck.

[1] *hind.* servant.
[2] *ruth.* Pity.

But at midnight's stroke they cleared the bay,
And the White Ship furrowed the water-way.

The sails were set, and the oars kept tune
To the double flight of the ship and the moon.

Swifter and swifter the White Ship sped,
Till she flew as the spirit flies from the dead:

As white as a lily glimmered she,
Like a ship's fair ghost upon the sea.

And the Prince cried, "Friends, 'tis the hour to sing!
Is a songbird's course so swift on the wing?"

And under the winter stars' still throng,
From brown throats, white throats, merry and strong,
The knights and the ladies raised a song.

A song,—nay, a shriek that rent the sky,
That leaped o'er the deep!—the grievous cry
Of three hundred living that now must die,—

An instant shriek that sprang to the shock
As the ship's keel felt the sunken rock.

'Tis said that afar—a shrill strange sigh—
The King's ships heard it and knew not why.

Pale Fitz-Stephen stood by the helm
'Mid all those folk that the waves must whelm.

A great king's heir for the waves to whelm,
And the helpless pilot pale at the helm!

The ship was eager and sucked athirst,
By the stealthy stab of the sharp reef pierced:

And like the moil[1] round a sinking cup,
The waters against her crowded up.

A moment the pilot's senses spin,—
The next he snatched the Prince 'mid the din,
Cut the boat loose, and the youth leaped in.

A few friends leaped with him, standing near.
"Row! the sea's smooth and the night is clear!"

"What! none to be saved but these and I?"
"Row, row as you'd live! All here must die!"

Out of the churn of the choking ship,
Which the gulf grapples and the waves strip,
They struck with the strained oars' flash and dip.

'Twas then o'er the splitting bulwarks' brim
The Prince's sister screamed to him.

He gazed aloft, still rowing apace,
And through the whirled surf he knew her face.

To the toppling decks clave one and all
As a fly cleaves to a chamber-wall.

I Berold was clinging anear;
I prayed for myself and quaked with fear,
But I saw his eyes as he looked at her.

He knew her face and he heard her cry,
And he said, "Put back! she must not die!"

And back with the current's force they reel,
Like a leaf that's drawn to a water-wheel.

'Neath the ship's travail[2] they scarce might float,
But he rose and stood in the rocking boat.

Low the poor ship leaned on the tide:
O'er the naked keel as she best might slide,
The sister toiled to the brother's side.

---

[1] *moil.* Rush of water.

[2] *travail.* Labor, tossing.

He reached an oar to her from below,
And stiffened his arms to clutch her so.

But now from the ship some spied the boat,
And "Saved!" was the cry from many a throat.

And down to the boat they leaped and fell:
It turned as a bucket turns in a well,
And nothing was there but the surge and swell.

The Prince that was and the King to come,
There in an instant gone to his doom,

Despite of all England's bended knee
And maugre[1] the Norman fealty!

He was a Prince of lust and pride;
He showed no grace till the hour he died.

When he should be king, he oft would vow,
He'd yoke the peasant to his own plough.
O'er him the ships score their furrows now.

God only knows where his soul did wake,
But I saw him die for his sister's sake.

By none but me can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold.
(*Lands are swayed by a king on a throne.*)
'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,
Yet the tale can be told by none but me.
(*The sea hath no king but God alone.*)

. . . . .

Three hundred souls were all lost but one,
And I drifted over the sea alone.

At last the morning rose on the sea,
Like an angel's wing that beat towards me.

Sore numbed I was in my sheepskin coat;
Half dead I hung, and might nothing note,
Till I woke sun-warned in a fisher-boat.

The sun was high o'er the eastern brim,
As I praised God and gave thanks to Him.

That day I told my tale to a priest,
Who charged me, till the shrift[2] were released,
That I should keep it in mine own breast.

And with the priest I thence did fare
To King Henry's court at Winchester.

We spoke with the King's high chamberlain,
And he wept and mourned again and again,
As if his own son had been slain;

And round us ever there crowded fast
Great men with faces all aghast;

And who so bold that might tell the thing
Which now they knew to their lord the King?
Much woe I learnt in their communing.

The King had watched with a heart sore stirred
For two whole days, and this was the third;

And still to all his court would he say,
"What keeps my son so long away?"

And they said: "The ports lie far and wide
That skirt the swell of the English tide;

"And England's cliffs are not more white
Than her women are, and scarce so light
Her skies as their eyes are blue and bright;

"And in some port that he reached from France
The Prince has lingered for his pleasaunce."

But once the King asked: "What distant cry
Was that we heard 'twixt the sea and sky?"

And one said: "With suchlike shouts, pardie!
Do the fishers fling their nets at sea."

---

[1] *maugre.* In spite of.

[2] *shrift.* Confession.

And one: "Who knows not the shrieking quest
When the sea-mew misses its young from the nest?"

'Twas thus till now they had soothed his dread,
Albeit they knew not what they said;

But who should speak to-day of the thing
That all knew there except the King?

Then pondering much they found a way,
And met round the King's high seat that day;

And the King sat, with a heart sore stirred,
And seldom he spoke and seldom heard.

'Twas then through the hall the King was ware
Of a little boy with golden hair,

As bright as the golden poppy is,
That the beach breeds for the surf to kiss;

Yet pale his cheek as the thorn in spring,
And his garb black like the raven's wing.

Nothing heard but his foot through the hall,
For now the lords were silent all.

And the King wondered, and said, "Alack!
Who sends me a fair boy dressed in black?

"Why, sweet heart, do you pace through the hall,
As though my court were a funeral?"

Then lowly knelt the child at the dais,
And looked up weeping in the King's face.

"O wherefore black, O King, ye may say,
For white is the hue of death to-day.

"Your son and all his fellowship
Lie low in the sea with the White Ship."

King Henry fell as a man struck dead;
And speechless still he stared from his bed,
When to him next day my rede I read.[1]

There's many an hour must needs beguile
A king's high heart that he should smile,—

Full many a lordly hour, full fain[2]
Of his realm's rule and pride of his reign;
But this king never smiled again.

By none but me can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold.
(*Lands that are swayed by a king on a throne.*)
'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,
Yet the tale can be told by none but me.
(*The sea hath no king but God alone.*)

(1881)

THE BALLAD OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

ROBERT BUCHANAN

[Medieval legends told of supernatural difficulties in the way of finding burial for the body of Judas. The poet develops this theme, in the manner of an old ballad, adding a modern interpretation of the theme of Christ's all-pardoning love.]

'Twas the body of Judas Iscariot
  Lay in the Field of Blood;
'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
  Beside the body stood.

Black was the earth by night,
  And black was the sky;
Black, black were the broken clouds,
  Though the red moon went by.

'Twas the body of Judas Iscariot
  Strangled and dead lay there;
'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
  Looked on it in despair.

The breath of the world came and went
  Like a sick man's in rest;
Drop by drop on the world's eyes
  The dews fell cool and blest.

Then the soul of Judas Iscariot
  Did make a gentle moan—
"I will bury underneath the ground
  My flesh and blood and bone.

"I will bury deep beneath the soil,
  Lest mortals look thereon,
And when the wolf and raven come
  The body will be gone!

---

[1] *my rede I read.* I told my tale.

[2] *fain.* Glad.

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"The stones of the field are sharp as steel,
And hard and bold, God wot;
And I must bear my body hence
Until I find a spot."

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
So grim, and gaunt, and gray,
Raised the body of Judas Iscariot,
And carried it away.

And as he bare it from the field
Its touch was cold as ice,
And the ivory teeth within the jaw
Rattled aloud, like dice.

As the soul of Judas Iscariot
Carried its load with pain,
The Eye of Heaven, like a lantern's eye,
Opened and shut again.

Half he walked, and half he seemed
Lifted on the cold wind;
He did not turn, for chilly hands
Were pushing from behind.

The first place that he came unto
It was the open wold,[1]
And underneath were prickly whins,[2]
And a wind that blew so cold.

The next place that he came unto
It was a stagnant pool,
And when he threw the body in
It floated light as wool.

He drew the body on his back,
And it was dripping chill,
And the next place that he came unto
Was a Cross upon a hill.

A Cross upon a windy hill,
And a Cross on either side,
Three skeletons that swing thereon,
Who had been crucified.

And on the middle cross-bar sat
A white Dove slumbering;
Dim it sat in the dim light,
With its head beneath its wing.

And underneath the middle Cross
A grave yawned wide and vast,
But the soul of Judas Iscariot
Shivered, and glided past.

The fourth place that he came unto
It was the Brig[3] of Dread,
And the great torrents rushing down
Were deep, and swift, and red.

He dared not fling the body in
For fear of faces dim,
And arms were waved in the wild water
To thrust it back to him.

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Turned from the Brig of Dread,
And the dreadful foam of the wild water
Had splashed the body red.

For days and nights he wandered on
Upon an open plain,
And the days went by like blinding mist,
And the nights like rushing rain.

For days and nights he wandered on,
All through the Wood of Woe;
And the nights went by like moaning wind,
And the days like drifting snow.

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Came with a weary face—
Alone, alone, and all alone,
Alone in a lonely place!

He wandered east, he wandered west,
And heard no human sound;
For months and years, in grief and tears,
He wandered round and round.

For months and years, in grief and tears,
He walked the silent night;
Then the soul of Judas Iscariot
Perceived a far-off light.

A far-off light across the waste,
As dim as dim might be,
That came and went like a lighthouse gleam
On a black night at sea.

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Crawled to the distant gleam;
And the rain came down, and the rain was blown
Against him with a scream.

---

[1] *wold.* Down, open rolling country.
[2] *whins.* Furze or gorse.
[3] *Brig.* Bridge.

For days and nights he wandered on,
Pushed on by hands behind;
And the days went by like black, black rain,
And the nights like rushing wind.

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot,
Strange, and sad, and tall,
Stood all alone at dead of night
Before a lighted hall.

And the wold was white with snow
And his foot-marks black and damp,
And the ghost of the silver moon arose,
Holding her yellow lamp.

And the icicles were on the eaves,
And the walls were deep with white,
And the shadows of the guests within
Passed on the window light.

The shadows of the wedding guests
Did strangely come and go,
And the body of Judas Iscariot
Lay stretched along the snow.

The body of Judas Iscariot
Lay stretched along the snow;
'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Ran swiftly to and fro.

To and fro, and up and down,
He ran so swiftly there,
As round and round the frozen Pole
Glideth the lean white bear.

'Twas the Bridegroom sat at the table-head,
And the lights burned bright and clear,—
"Oh, who is that," the Bridegroom said,
"Whose weary feet I hear?"

'Twas one looked from the lighted hall,
And answered soft and slow,
"It is a wolf runs up and down
With a black track in the snow."

The Bridegroom in his robe of white
Sat at the table-head—
"O, who is that who moans without?"
The blessed Bridegroom said.

'Twas one looked from the lighted hall,
And answered fierce and low,
"'Tis the soul of Judas Iscariot
Gliding to and fro."

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Did hush itself and stand,
And saw the Bridegroom at the door
With a light in his hand.

The Bridegroom stood in the open door,
And he was clad in white,
And far within the Lord's Supper
Was spread so long and bright.

The Bridegroom shaded his eyes and looked,
And his face was bright to see—
"What dost thou here at the Lord's Supper,
With thy body's sins?" said he.

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Stood black, and sad, and bare,—
"I have wandered many nights and days;
There is no light elsewhere."

'Twas the wedding guests cried out within,
And their eyes were fierce and bright,—
"Scourge the soul of Judas Iscariot
Away into the night!"

The Bridegroom stood in the open door,
And he waved hands still and slow,
And the third time that he waved his hands
The air was thick with snow.

And of every flake of falling snow,
Before it touched the ground,
There came a dove, and a thousand doves
Made sweet sound.

'Twas the body of Judas Iscariot
Floated away full fleet,
And the wings of the doves that bare it off
Were like its winding-sheet.

'Twas the Bridegroom stood at the open door,
And beckoned, smiling sweet;
'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Stole in, and fell at his feet.

"The Holy Supper is spread within,
And the many candles shine,
And I have waited long for thee
Before I poured the wine!"

The supper wine is poured at last,
  The lights burn bright and fair;
Iscariot washes the Bridegroom's feet,
  And dries them with his hair.

(1882)

THE SLAYING OF URGAN

(From *Tristram of Lyonesse*)

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

[This is a passage from "The Last Pilgrimage," one of the nine parts of the story of Tristram in Swinburne's version. Tristram has been summoned to rid Triamour, a Welsh king, of the giant Urgan, who is devastating the land and slaying the people.]

But Tristram by dense hills and deepening vales
Rode through the wild glad wastes of glorious Wales,
High-hearted with desire of happy fight,
And strong in soul with merrier sense of might
Than since the fair first years that hailed him knight;
For all his will was toward the war, so long
Had love repressed and wrought his glory wrong,
So far the triumph and so fair the praise
Seemed now that kindled all his April days.
And here in bright blown autumn, while his life
Was summer's yet for strength toward love or strife,
Blithe waxed his hope toward battle, and high desire
To pluck once more (as out of circling fire)
Fame, the broad flower whose breath makes death more sweet
Than roses crushed by love's receding feet.

But all the lovely land wherein he went
The blast of ruin and ravenous war had rent;
And black with fire the fields where homesteads were,
And foul with festering dead the high soft air,
And loud with wail of women many a stream
Whose own live song was like love's deepening dream,
Spake all against the spoiler; wherefore still
Wrath waxed[1] with pity, quickening all his will,
In Tristram's heart for every league he rode,
Through the aching land so broad a curse bestrode
With so supreme a shadow; till one dawn,
Above the green bloom of a gleaming lawn,
High on the strait[2] steep windy bridge that spanned
A glen's deep mouth, he saw that shadow stand
Visible, sword on high and mace in hand,
Vast as the mid bulk of a roof-tree's beam.
So, sheer above the wild wolf-haunted stream,
Dire as the face disfeatured[3] of a dream,
Rose Urgan; and his eyes were night and flame;
But like the fiery dawn were his that came
Against him, lit with more sublime desire
Than lifts toward heaven the leaping heart of fire.
And strong in vantage of his perilous place,
The huge high presence, red as earth's first race,
Reared like a reed the might up of his mace,
And smote. But lightly Tristram swerved, and drove
Right in on him, whose void stroke only clove
Air, and fell wide, thundering athwart; and he
Sent forth a stormier cry than wind or sea
When midnight takes the tempest for her lord.
And all the glen's throat seemed as hell's that roared;
But high like heaven's light over hell shone Tristram's sword,
Falling; and bright as storm shows God's bare brand[4]
Flashed as it shore sheer off the huge right hand,
Whose strength was as the shadow of death on all that land.

---

[1] *waxed.* Grew.
[2] *strait.* Narrow.
[3] *disfeatured.* Distorted.
[4] *brand.* Sword.

And like the trunk of some grim tree sawn through
Reeled Urgan, as his left hand grasped and drew
A steel by sorcerers tempered; and anew
Raged the red wind of fluctuant[1] fight, till all
The cliffs were thrilled as by the clangorous call
Of storm's blown trumpets from the core of night,
Charging; and even as with the storm-wind's might
On Tristram's helm that sword crashed; and the knight
Fell, and his arms clashed, and a wild cry brake
From those far off that heard it, for his sake
Soul-stricken; and that bulk of monstrous birth
Sent forth again a cry more dire, for mirth.
But ere the sunbright arms were soiled of earth,
They flashed again, re-risen; and swift and loud
Rang the strokes out as from a circling cloud,
So dense the dust wrought over them its drifted shroud.
Strong strokes, within the mist their battle made,
Each hailed on other through the shifting shade
That clung about them hurtling as the swift fight swayed;
And each between the jointed corslet saw
Break forth his foe's bright blood at each grim flaw
Steel made in hammered iron; till again
The fiend put forth his might more strong for pain,
And cleft the great knight's glittering shield in twain,
Laughing, for very wrath and thirst to kill,
A beast's broad laugh of blind and wolfish will,
And smote again, ere Tristram's lips drew breath,
Panting, and swept as by the sense of death,
That surely should have touched and sealed them fast,
Save that the sheer stroke shrilled aside, and passed
Frustrate.[2] But answering Tristram smote anew,
And thrust the brute breast as with lightning through
Clean with one cleaving stroke of perfect might;
And violently the vast bulk leaped upright,
And plunged over the bridge, and fell; and all
The cliffs reverberate from his monstrous fall
Rang; and the land by Tristram's grace was free.
So with high laud and honor thence went he.

(1882)

OPPORTUNITY

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.
A craven hung along the battle's edge,
And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel—
That blue blade that the king's son bears—but this
Blunt thing—!" he snapped and flung it from his hand,
And lowering crept away and left the field.
Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day.

(1887)

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[1] *fluctuant.* Varying.

[2] *Frustrate.* Of no effect.

THE HIGH TIDE AT GETTYSBURG*

WILL HENRY THOMPSON

[The Battle of Gettysburg, July 1-3, 1863, definitely turned the fortunes of the Civil War in favor of the Union. The most spectacular and decisive incident was Pickett's charge, on July 3, the failure of which caused the Confederate General Lee to retire from Pennsylvania. Of the other officers mentioned in the poem, Pettigrew, Kemper, Garnett, and Armistead were brigade commanders under Pickett, while Doubleday was a division commander on the Union side.]

A cloud possessed the hollow field,
The gathering battle's smoky shield:
Athwart the gloom the lightning flashed,
And through the cloud some horsemen dashed,
And from the heights the thunder pealed.

Then at the brief command of Lee
Moved out that matchless infantry,
With Pickett leading grandly down,
To rush against the roaring crown
Of those dread heights of destiny.

Far heard above the angry guns
A cry across the tumult runs—
The voice that rang through Shiloh's woods
And Chickamauga's solitudes,
The fierce South cheering on her sons!

Ah, how the withering tempest blew
Against the front of Pettigrew!
A Kamsin wind[1] that scorched and singed
Like that infernal flame that fringed
The British squares at Waterloo!

A thousand fell where Kemper led;
A thousand died where Garnett bled;
In blinding flame and strangling smoke,
The remnant through the batteries broke,
And crossed the works with Armistead.

"Once more in Glory's van with me!"
Virginia cried to Tennessee;
"We two together, come what may,
Shall stand upon these works to-day!"
(The reddest day in history.)

Brave Tennessee! In reckless way
Virginia heard her comrade say,
"Close round this rent and riddled rag!"
What time she set her battle-flag
Amid the guns of Doubleday.

But who shall break the guards that wait
Before the awful face of Fate?
The tattered standards of the South
Were shriveled at the cannon's mouth,
And all her hopes were desolate.

In vain the Tennesseean set
His breast against the bayonet.
In vain Virginia charged and raged,
A tigress in her wrath uncaged,
Till all the hill was red and wet.

Above the bayonets mixed and crossed,
Men saw a gray, gigantic ghost
Receding through the battle-cloud,
And heard across the tempest loud,
The death-cry of a nation lost.

The brave went down; without disgrace
They leaped to Ruin's red embrace:
They only heard Fame's thunders wake,
And saw the dazzling sunburst break
In smiles on Glory's bloody face.

They fell who lifted up a hand
And bade the sun in heaven to stand:
They smote and fell who set the bars
Against the progress of the stars,
And stayed the march of Motherland.

They stood who saw the future come
On through the fight's delirium:
They smote and stood who held the hope
Of nations on that slippery slope
Amid the cheers of Christendom.

God lives! He forged the iron will
That clutched and held that trembling hill.
God lives and reigns: He built and lent
The heights for Freedom's battlement
Where floats her flag in triumph still.

Fold up the banners! Smelt the guns!
Love rules. Her gentler purpose runs.
A mighty mother turns in tears
The pages of her battle years,
Lamenting all her fallen sons.

(1888)

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[1] *Kamsin wind.* A wind that comes to Egypt from the Sahara Desert.

st universal type of men -

character is important thing -

A BALLAD OF EAST AND WEST

more or less journalistic type.

RUDYARD KIPLING

[This tale concerns the country along the northern border of India, near the passes communicating with Afghanistan; the inhabitants are lawless, daring, and characterized by bitter feuds and strange vows, as Kipling depicts them. Native troops under British officers patrol the plains, and the commander of a regiment or *risala* of these men is called the Ressaldar.]

Kamal is out with twenty men to raise the Borderside,
And he has lifted the Colonel's mare that is the Colonel's pride:
He has lifted her out of the stable-door between the dawn and the day,
And turned the calkins[1] upon her feet, and ridden her far away.
Then up and spoke the Colonel's son that led a troop of the Guides:
"Is there never a man of all my men can say where Kamal hides?"
Then up and spoke Mohammed Khan, the son of the Ressaldar,
"If ye know the track of the morning mist, ye know where his pickets are.
At dusk he harries the Abazai—at dawn he is into Bonair—
But he must go by Fort Bukloh to his own place to fare;
So if ye gallop to Fort Bukloh as fast as a bird can fly,
By the favor of God ye may cut him off ere he win to the Tongue of Jagai.
But if he be past the Tongue of Jagai, right swiftly turn ye then,
For the length and the breadth of that grisly plain is sown with Kamal's men.
There is rock to the left, and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,
And ye may hear a breech-bolt snick where never a man is seen."

The Colonel's son has taken a horse, and a raw rough dun was he,
With the mouth of a bell and the heart of hell and the head of a gallows-tree.
The Colonel's son to the Fort has won,[2] they bid him stay to eat—
Who rides at the tail of a Border thief, he sits not long at his meat.
He's up and away from Fort Bukloh as fast as he can fly,
Till he was aware of his father's mare in the gut of the Tongue of Jagai,—
Till he was aware of his father's mare, with Kamal upon her back;
And when he could spy the white of her eye, he made the pistol crack.
He has fired once, he has fired twice, but the whistling ball went wide.
"Ye shoot like a soldier," Kamal said. "Show now if ye can ride."
It's up and over the Tongue of Jagai, as blown dust-devils go,
The dun he fled like a stag of ten, but the mare like a barren doe.
The dun he leaned against the bit and slugged his head above,
But the red mare played with the snaffle-bars as a lady plays with a glove.
There was rock to the left, and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,
And thrice he heard a breech-bolt snick, though never a man was seen.

They have ridden the low moon out of the sky, their hoofs drum up the dawn,
The dun he went like a wounded bull, but the mare like a new-roused fawn.
The dun he fell at a watercourse—in a woful heap fell he,
And Kamal has turned the red mare back, and pulled the rider free.
He has knocked the pistol out of his hand—small room was there to strive—
"'Twas only by favor of mine," quoth he, "ye rode so long alive.
There was not a rock for twenty mile, there was not a clump of tree,
But covered a man of my own men with his rifle cocked on his knee.
If I had raised my bridle-hand, as I have held it low,
The little jackals that flee so fast were feasting all in a row;
If I had bowed my head on my breast, as I have held it high,
The kite that whistles above us now were gorged till she could not fly."
Lightly answered the Colonel's son:—"Do good to bird and beast,

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[1] *calkins.* Spurs on horse-shoes to prevent slipping.
[2] *won.* Got.

But count who come for the broken meats before thou makest a feast.
If there should follow a thousand swords to carry my bones away,
Belike the price of a jackal's meal were more than a thief could pay.
They will feed their horse on the standing crop, their men on the garnered grain,
The thatch of the byres[1] will serve their fires when all the cattle are slain.
But if thou thinkest the price be fair, and thy brethren wait to sup,
The hound is kin to the jackal-spawn,—howl, dog, and call them up!
And if thou thinkest the price be high, in steer and gear and stack,
Give me my father's mare again, and I'll fight my own way back!"

Kamal has gripped him by the hand, and set him upon his feet.
"No talk shall be of dogs," said he, "when wolf and gray wolf meet.
May I eat dirt if thou hast hurt of me in deed or breath.
What dam of lances brought thee forth to jest at the dawn with Death?"
Lightly answered the Colonel's son: "I hold by the blood of my clan;
Take up the mare for my father's gift,—by God, she has carried a man!"
The red mare ran to the Colonel's son, and nuzzled her nose in his breast;
"We be two strong men," said Kamal then, "but she loveth the younger best.
So she shall go with a lifter's dower, my turquoise-studded rein,
My broidered saddle and saddle-cloth, and silver stirrups twain."
The Colonel's son a pistol drew, and held it muzzle-end:
"Ye have taken the one from a foe," said he; "will ye take the mate from a friend?"
"A gift for a gift," said Kamal straight; "a limb for the risk of a limb.
Thy father has sent his son to me,—I'll send my son to him."
With that he whistled his only son, that dropped from a mountain-crest,—
He trod the ling[2] like a buck in spring, and he looked like a lance in rest.
"Now here is thy master," Kamal said, "who leads a troop of the Guides,
And thou must ride at his left side as shield to shoulder rides.
Till Death or I cut loose the tie, at camp and board and bed,
Thy life is his—thy fate it is to guard him with thy head.
And thou must eat the White Queen's meat, and all her foes are thine,
And thou must harry[3] thy father's hold for the peace of the Border-line,
And thou must make a trooper tough and hack thy way to power—
Belike they will raise thee to Ressaldar when I am hanged in Peshawur."

They have looked each other between the eyes, and there they found no fault,
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on leavened bread and salt;
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on fire and fresh-cut sod,
On the hilt and the haft of the Khyber knife, and the Wondrous Names of God.
The Colonel's son he rides the mare, and Kamal's boy the dun,
And two have come back to Fort Bukloh where there went forth but one.
And when they drew to the Quarter-Guard, full twenty swords flew clear—
There was not a man but carried his feud with the blood of the mountaineer.
"Ha' done! ha' done!" said the Colonel's son. "Put up the steel at your sides!
Last night ye had[4] struck at a Border thief—to-night 'tis a man of the Guides!"

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet → Symbolizing
Till earth and sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat.
But there is neither east nor west, border, nor breed, nor birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth.

(1889)

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[1] *byres.* Stables.
[2] *ling.* Heather.
[3] *harry.* Attack.
[4] *had.* Would have.

Strong human personalities can come together when E. & W. cannot -

The characters are typical rather than

THE BALLAD OF MOLL MAGEE

WILLIAM B. YEATS

Come round me, little childer;
There, don't fling stones at me
Because I mutter as I go;
But pity Moll Magee.

My man was a poor fisher
With shore lines in the say;
My work was saltin' herrings
The whole of the long day.

And sometimes from the saltin' shed,
I scarce could drag my feet
Under the blessed moonlight,
Along the pebbly street.

I'd always been but weakly,
And my baby was just born;
A neighbor minded her by day,
I minded her till morn.

I lay upon my baby;
Ye little childer dear,
I looked on my cold baby
When the morn grew frosty and clear.

A weary woman sleeps so hard!
My man grew red and pale,
And gave me money, and bade me go
To my own place Kinsale.

He drove me out and shut the door,
And gave his curse to me;
I went away in silence,
No neighbor could I see.

The windows and the doors were shut,
One star shone faint and green;
The little straws were turnin' round
Across the bare boreen.[1]

I went away in silence;
Beyond old Martin's byre[2]
I saw a kindly neighbor
Blowin' her mornin' fire.

She drew from me my story—
My money's all used up,
And still, with pityin', scornin' eye,
She gives me bite and sup.

She says my man will surely come
And fetch me home agin;
But always, as I'm movin' round,
Without doors or within,

Pilin' the wood or pilin' the turf,
Or goin' to the well,
I'm thinkin' of my baby
And keenin'[3] to mysel'.

And sometimes I am sure she knows
When, openin' wide His door,
God lights the stars, His candles,
And looks upon the poor.

So now, ye little childer,
Ye won't fling stones at me;
But gather with your shinin' looks
And pity Moll Magee.

(1889)

THE BALLAD OF FATHER GILLIGAN

WILLIAM B. YEATS

The old priest Peter Gilligan
Was weary night and day;
For half his flock were in their beds,
Or under green sods lay.

Once, while he nodded on a chair,
At the moth-hour of eve,
Another poor man sent for him,
And he began to grieve.

"I have no rest, nor joy, nor peace,
For people die and die;"
And after cried he, "God forgive!
My body spake, not I!"

He knelt, and leaning on the chair
He prayed and fell asleep;
And the moth-hour went from the fields,
And stars began to peep.

They slowly into millions grew,
And leaves shook in the wind;
And God covered the world with shade,
And whispered to mankind.

Upon the time of sparrow chirp,
When the moths came once more,
The old priest Peter Gilligan
Stood upright on the floor.

---

[1] *boreen.* Lane.
[2] *byre.* Cow-shed.
[3] *keenin'.* Lamenting.

"Mavrone! mavrone! the man has died,
While I slept on the chair."
He roused his horse out of its sleep,
And rode with little care.

He rode now as he never rode,
By rocky lane and fen;
The sick man's wife opened the door:
"Father! you come again!"

"And is the poor man dead?" he cried.
"He died an hour ago."
The old priest Peter Gilligan
In grief swayed to and fro.

"When you were gone, he turned and died
As merry as a bird."
The old priest Peter Gilligan
He knelt him at that word.

"He who hath made the night of stars
For souls who tire and bleed
Sent one of His great angels down
To help me in my need.

"He who is wrapped in purple robes,
With planets in His care,
Had pity on the least of things
Asleep upon a chair."

(1892)

ELFIN SKATES

EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON

[This and the following poem—each made of two sonnets—are from a collection called *Sonnets of the Wingless Hours,* written when the poet was confined to his chair through a long period of helpless illness.]

I

They wheeled me up the snow-cleared gardenway,
And left me where the dazzling heaps were thrown;
And, as I mused on winter sports once known,
Up came a tiny man to where I lay.
He was six inches high; his beard was grey
As silver frost; his coat and cap were brown,
Of mouse's fur; while two wee skates hung down
From his wee belt, and gleamed in winter's ray.
He clambered up my couch, and eyed me long.
"Show me thy skates," said I, "for once, alas!
I too could skate. What pixie mayst thou be?"
"I am the king" he answered, "of the throng
Called Winter Elves. We live in roots, and pass
The summer months asleep. Frost sets us free.

II

"We find by moonlight little pools of ice,
Just one yard wide," the imp of winter said;
"And skate all night, while mortals are in bed,
In tiny circles of our elf device;
And when it snows we harness forest mice
To wee bark sleighs, with lightest fibrous thread,
And scour the woods; or play all night instead
With snowballs large as peas, well patted thrice.

"But is it true, as I have heard them say,
That thou canst share in winter games no more,
But liest motionless, year in, year out?
That must be hard. To-day I cannot stay,
But I'll return each year, when all is hoar,
And tell thee when the skaters are about."

(1894)

THE DEATH OF PUCK

EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON

I

I fear that Puck is dead,—it is so long
Since men last saw him; dead with all the rest
Of that sweet elfin crew that made their nest
In hollow nuts, where hazels sing their song;
Dead for ever, like the antique throng
The elves replaced: the Dryad that you guessed
Behind the leaves; the Naiad weed-bedressed;
The leaf-eared Faun that loved to lead you wrong.

Tell me, thou hopping Robin, hast thou met
A little man, no bigger than thyself,
Whom they call Puck, where woodland bells are wet?
Tell me, thou Wood-Mouse, hast thou seen an elf
Whom they call Puck, and is he seated yet,
Capped with a snail-shell, on his mushroom shelf?

II

The Robin gave three hops, and chirped, and said:
"Yes, I knew Puck, and loved him; though I trow
He mimicked oft my whistle, chuckling low;
Yes, I knew Cousin Puck; but he is dead.
We found him lying on his mushroom bed—
The Wren and I—half covered up with snow,
As we were hopping where the berries grow.
We think he died of cold. Ay, Puck is fled."

And then the Wood-Mouse said: "We made the Mole
Dig him a little grave beneath the moss,
And four big Dormice placed him in the hole.
The Squirrel made with sticks a little cross;—
Puck was a Christian elf, and had a soul;—
And all we velvet-jackets mourn his loss."

(1894)

Fancy of Kipling for Sea

THE LAST CHANTEY*

RUDYARD KIPLING

"And there was no more sea." [*Revelation* 21:1.]

Thus said the Lord in the Vault above the Cherubim,
Calling to the angels and the souls in their degree:
"Lo! Earth has passed away
On the smoke of Judgment Day.
That Our word may be established shall We gather up the sea?"

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners:
"Plague upon the hurricane that made us furl and flee!
But the war is done between us,
In the deep the Lord hath seen us—
Our bones we'll leave the barracout',[1] and God may sink the sea!"

Then said the soul of Judas that betrayèd Him:
"Lord, hast Thou forgotten Thy covenant with me?
How once a year I go
To cool me on the floe,
And Ye take my day of mercy if Ye take away the sea!"

Then said the soul of the Angel of the Off-shore Wind:
(He that bits the thunder when the bull-mouthed breakers flee):
"I have watch and ward to keep
O'er Thy wonders on the deep,
And Ye take mine honor from me if Ye take away the sea!"

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners:
"Nay, but we were angry, and a hasty folk are we!
If we worked the ship together
Till she foundered in foul weather,
Are we babes that we should clamor for a vengeance on the sea?"

Then said the souls of the slaves that men threw overboard:
"Kenneled in the picaroon[2] a weary band were we;
But Thy arm was strong to save,
And it touched us on the wave,
And we drowsed the long tides idle till Thy Trumpets tore the sea."

Then cried the soul of the stout Apostle Paul to God:
"Once we frapped[3] a ship, and she labored woundily.[4]
There were fourteen score of these,
And they blessed Thee on their knees,
When they learned Thy Grace and Glory under Malta by the sea."

---

* From *The Seven Seas.* Copyright, 1896, by Rudyard Kipling.

[1] *barracout'.* Barracouta, for barracuda, a large fish.
[2] *picaroon.* Pirate-ship.
[3] *frapped.* Lashed, girded (see *Acts* 27:17).
[4] *woundily.* Excessively.

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners,
Plucking at their harps, and they plucked unhandily:
"Our thumbs are rough and tarred,
And the tune is something hard—
May we lift a Deepsea Chantey[1] such as seamen use at sea?"

Then said the souls of the gentlemen-adventurers—
Fettered wrist to bar all for red iniquity:
"Ho, we revel in our chains
O'er the sorrow that was Spain's;
Heave or sink it, leave or drink it, we were masters of the sea!"

Up spake the soul of a gray Gothavn 'speckshioner[2]—
(He that led the flinching[3] in the fleets of fair Dundee):
"Ho, the ringer and right whale,
And the fish we struck for sale,
Will Ye whelm them all for wantonness that wallow in the sea?"

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners,
Crying: "Under Heaven, here is neither lead nor lea!
Must we sing for evermore
On the windless, glassy floor?
Take back your golden fiddles and we'll beat to open sea!"

Then stooped the Lord, and He called the good sea up to Him,
And 'stablishèd his borders unto all eternity,
That such as have no pleasure
For to praise the Lord by measure,[4]
They may enter into galleons and serve Him on the sea.

Sun, wind, and cloud shall fail not from the face of it,
Stinging, ringing spindrift, nor the fulmar[5] flying free;
And the ships shall go abroad
To the glory of the Lord
Who heard the silly[6] sailor-folk and gave them back their sea!

(1895)

CRAVEN

(MOBILE BAY, 1864)

HENRY NEWBOLT

Over the turret, shut in his iron-clad tower,
Craven was conning his ship through smoke and flame;
Gun to gun he had battered the fort for an hour,
Now was the time for a charge to end the game.

There lay the narrowing channel, smooth and grim,
A hundred deaths beneath it, and never a sign;
There lay the enemy's ships, and sink or swim
The flag was flying, and he was head of the line.

The fleet behind was jamming; the monitor hung
Beating the stream; the roar for a moment hushed,
Craven spoke to the pilot; slow she swung;
Again he spoke, and right for the foe she rushed.

Into the narrowing channel, between the shore
And the sunk torpedoes lying in treacherous rank;
She turned but a yard too short; a muffled roar,
A mountainous wave, and she rolled, righted, and sank.

Over the manhole, up in the iron-clad tower,
Pilot and Captain met as they turned to fly:
The hundredth part of a moment seemed an hour,
For one could pass to be saved, and one must die.

They stood like men in a dream: Craven spoke,
Spoke as he lived and fought, with a Captain's pride,
"After you, Pilot." The pilot woke,
Down the ladder he went, and Craven died.

---

[1] *Deepsea Chantey.* Pronounced "Dipsy Shanty"; a *chantey* is a sailor's song.
[2] *'speckshioner.* Chief harpooner of a whaler.
[3] *flinching.* Cutting of whale-blubber.
[4] *by measure.* In song.
[5] *fulmar.* Petrel.
[6] *silly.* Poor.

All men praise the deed and the manner, but we—
We set it apart from the pride that stoops to the proud,
The strength that is supple to serve the strong and free,
The grace of the empty hands and promises loud:

Sidney[1] thirsting, a humbler need to slake,
Nelson waiting his turn for the surgeon's hand,
Lucas crushed with chains for a comrade's sake,
Outram[2] coveting right before command:

These were paladins, these were Craven's peers,
These with him shall be crowned in story and song,
Crowned with the glitter of steel and the glimmer of tears,
Princes of courtesy, merciful, proud, and strong.

(1898)

GILLESPIE

HENRY NEWBOLT

[This ballad relates an incident of July 10, 1806, when General Robert Gillespie, a British officer, saved the fort at Vellore during a native mutiny.]

Riding at dawn, riding alone,
Gillespie left the town behind;
Before he turned by the westward road
A horseman crossed him, staggering blind.

"The Devil's abroad in false Vellore,
The Devil that stabs by night," he said,
"Women and children, rank and file,
Dying and dead, dying and dead."

Without a word, without a groan,
Sudden and swift Gillespie turned;
The blood roared in his ears like fire,
Like fire the road beneath him burned.

He thundered back to Arcot gate,
He thundered up through Arcot town;
Before he thought a second thought
In the barrack yard he lighted down.

"Trumpeter, sound for the Light Dragoons,
Sound to saddle and spur," he said;
"He that is ready may ride with me,
And he that can may ride ahead."

Fierce and fain, fierce and fain,
Behind him went the troopers grim;
They rode as ride the Light Dragoons,
But never a man could ride with him.

Their rowels ripped their horses' sides,
Their hearts were red with a deeper goad,
But ever alone before them all
Gillespie rode, Gillespie rode.

Alone he came to false Vellore,
The walls were lined, the gates were barred;
Alone he walked where the bullets bit,
And called above to the Sergeant's Guard.

"Sergeant, Sergeant, over the gate,
Where are your officers all?" he said;
Heavily came the Sergeant's voice,
"There are two living and forty dead."

"A rope, a rope," Gillespie cried:
They bound their belts to serve his need;
There was not a rebel behind the wall
But laid his barrel and drew his bead.

There was not a rebel among them all
But pulled his trigger and cursed his aim,
For lightly swung and rightly swung
Over the gate Gillespie came.

He dressed the line, he led the charge,
They swept the wall like a stream in spate,
And roaring over the roar they heard
The galloper guns that burst the gate.

Fierce and fain, fierce and fain,
The troopers rode the reeking flight:
The very stones remember still
The end of them that stab by night

---

[1] At the battle of Zutphen, 1586, Sir Philip Sidney, himself sorely wounded, gave the water provided for him to a dying foot-soldier, saying, "Thy necessity is greater than mine."

[2] James Outram, British General, who voluntarily yielded to Havelock, a junior officer, the honor of commanding the expedition for the relief of Lucknow, in 1857.

Library
Pacific Bible Seminary
4835 East Anaheim Street
California

They've kept the tale a hundred years,
 They'll keep the tale a hundred more:
Riding at dawn, riding alone,
 Gillespie came to false Vellore.

(1898)

Reminents of fairy stories & myths
mixed together for minds of sailors,

FORTY SINGING SEAMEN*

ALFRED NOYES

[The poet combines the materials of a sailors' "chantey" with the Greek legend of Polyphemus and the medieval legend of Prester John. Polyphemus was a one-eyed giant, or Cyclops, whom Ulysses blinded. Prester John was a mysterious personage, both priest and king, ruling over a wonderful empire in the far East.]

Chantey = rythm sailors fantacy of Noyes.
are used to.

Across the seas of Wonderland to Mogadore we plodded,
 Forty singing seamen in an old black barque,
And we landed in the twilight where a Polyphemus nodded
 With his battered moon-eye winking red and yellow through the dark.
  For his eye was growing mellow,
  Rich and ripe and red and yellow,
As was time since old Ulysses made him bellow in the dark!
Chorus.—Since Ulysses bunged his eye up with a pine-torch in the dark!

Were they mountains in the gloaming or the giant's ugly shoulders
 Just beneath the rolling eyeball, with its bleared and vinous glow,
Red and yellow o'er the purple of the pines among the boulders
 And the shaggy horror brooding on the sullen slopes below,
  Were they pines among the boulders
  Or the hair upon his shoulders?
We were only simple seamen, so of course we didn't know.
Cho.—We were simple singing seamen, so of course we couldn't know.

But we crossed a plain of poppies, and we came upon a fountain
 Not of water, but of jewels, like a spray of leaping fire;
And behind it, in an emerald glade, beneath a golden mountain,
 There stood a crystal palace, for a sailor to admire;
  For a troop of ghosts came round us,
  Which with leaves of bay they crowned us,
Then with grog they well-nigh drowned us, to the depth of our desire!
Cho.—And 'twas very friendly of them, as a sailor can admire!

There was music all about us,—we were growing quite forgetful
 We were only singing seamen from the dirt of London-town,
Though the nectar that we swallowed seemed to vanish half regretful
 As if we wasn't good enough to take such vittles down,—
  When we saw a sudden figure,
  Tall and black as any nigger,
Like the devil—only bigger—drawing near us with a frown!
Cho.—Like the devil—but much bigger—and he wore a golden crown!

And "What's all this?" he growls at us! With dignity we chaunted,
 "Forty singing seamen, sir, as won't be put upon!"
"What? Englishmen?" he cries. "Well, if ye don't mind being haunted,
 Faith, you're welcome to my palace; I'm the famous Prester John!
  Will ye walk into my palace?
  I don't bear 'ee any malice!
 One and all ye shall be welcome in the halls of Prester John."
Cho.—So we walked into the palace and the halls of Prester John!

Now the door was one great diamond and the hall a hollow ruby—
 Big as Beachy Head, my lads, nay bigger by a half!
And I sees the mate wi' mouth agape, a-staring like a booby,
 And the skipper close behind him, with his tongue out like a calf!
  Now the way to take it rightly
  Was to walk along politely
 Just as if you didn't notice—so I couldn't help but laugh!
Cho.—For they both forgot their manners and the crew was bound to laugh!

---

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But he took us through his palace and, my lads, as I'm a sinner,
We walked into an opal like a sunset-colored cloud—
"My dining-room," he says, and, quick as light we saw a dinner
Spread before us by the fingers of a hidden fairy crowd;
And the skipper, swaying gently
After dinner, murmurs faintly,
"I looks to-wards you, Prester John, you've done us very proud!"
Cho.—And we drank his health with honors, for he *done* us *very* proud!

Then he walks us to his garden where we sees a feathered demon
Very splendid and important on a sort of spicy tree!
"That's the phœnix," whispers Prester, "which all eddicated seamen
Knows the only one existent, and *he's* waiting for to flee!
When his hundred years expire
Then he'll set hisself afire
And another from his ashes rise most beautiful to see!"
Cho.—With wings of rose and emerald most beautiful to see!

Then he says, "In yonder forest there's a little silver river,
And whosoever drinks of it, his youth shall never die!
The centuries go by, but Prester John endures for ever
With his music in the mountains and his magic on the sky!
While *your* hearts are growing colder,
While your world is growing older,
There's a magic in the distance, where the sea-line meets the sky."
Cho.—It shall call to singing seamen till the fount o' song is dry!

So we thought we'd up and seek it, but that forest fair defied us,—
First a crimson leopard laughs at us most horrible to see,
Then a sea-green lion came and sniffed and licked his chops and eyed us,
While a red and yellow unicorn was dancing round a tree!
We was trying to look thinner,
Which was hard, because our dinner
Must ha' made us very tempting to a cat o' high degree!
Cho.—Must ha' made us very tempting to the whole menarjeree!

So we scuttled from that forest and across the poppy-meadows
Where the awful shaggy horror brooded o'er us in the dark!
And we pushes out from shore again, a-jumping at our shadows,
And pulls away most joyful to the old black barque!
And home again we plodded,
While the Polyphemus nodded
With his battered moon-eye winking red and yellow through the dark.
Cho.—Oh, the moon above the mountains, red and yellow through the dark!

Across the seas of Wonderland to London-town we blundered,
Forty singing seamen as was puzzled for to know
If the visions that we saw was caused by—here again we pondered—
A tipple in a vision forty thousand years ago.
Could the grog we *dreamt* we swallowed
Make us *dream* of all that followed?
We were only simple seamen, so of course we didn't know!
Cho.—We were simple singing seamen, so of course we could not know!

(1906)

THE LISTENERS

WALTER DE LA MARE

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor:
And a bird flew up out of the turret
Above the Traveller's head:
And he smote upon the door a second time;
"Is there anybody there?" he said.

But no one descended to the Traveller;
  No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his gray eyes,
  Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
  That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
  To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
  That goes down to the empty hall,
Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
  By the lonely Traveller's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
  Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
  'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
  Louder, and lifted his head:—
"Tell them I came, and no one answered,
  That I kept my word," he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
  Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
  From the one man left awake:
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
  And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
  When the plunging hoofs were gone.

(1911)

Ship's Painter

THE DAUBER ROUNDS CAPE HORN *

JOHN MASEFIELD

[From a long narrative poem, called *Dauber*, relating the adventures of an English boy who shipped as a seaman because he wished to be an artist—especially a painter of the sea.]

Word choice vivid + full of connotation -
Sensuousness -

So the night passed, but then no morning broke—
Only a something showed that night was dead.
A sea-bird, cackling like a devil, spoke,
And the fog drew away and hung like lead.
Like mighty cliffs it shaped, sullen and red;
Like glowering gods at watch it did appear,
And sometimes drew away, and then drew near.

Like islands, and like chasms, and like hell,
But always mighty and red, gloomy and ruddy,
Shutting the visible sea in like a well;
Slow heaving in vast ripples, blank and muddy,
Where the sun should have risen it streaked bloody.
The day was still-born; all the sea-fowl scattering
Splashed the still water, mewing, hovering, clattering.

Then Polar snow came down little and light,
Till all the sky was hidden by the small,
Most multitudinous drift of dirty white
Tumbling and wavering down and covering all—
Covering the sky, the sea, the clipper tall,
Furring the ropes with white, casing the mast,
Coming on no known air, but blowing past.

And all the air seemed full of gradual moan,
As though in those cloud-chasms the horns were blowing
The mort[1] for gods cast out and overthrown,
Or for the eyeless sun plucked out and going.
Slow the low gradual moan came in the snowing;
The Dauber felt the prelude had begun.
The snowstorm fluttered by; he saw the sun

Show and pass by, gleam from one towering prison
Into another, vaster and more grim,
Which in dull crags of darkness had arisen
To muffle-to a final door on him,
The gods upon the dull crags lowered dim,
The pigeons chattered, quarreling in the track.
In the southwest the dimness dulled to black.

---

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[1] *mort.* Flourish of horns sounded at the death of hunted game.

Then came the cry of "Call all hands on deck!"
The Dauber knew its meaning; it was come:
Cape Horn, that tramples beauty into wreck,
And crumples steel, and smites the strong man dumb.
Down clattered flying kites and staysails: some
Sang out in quick, high calls: the fairleads[1] skirled,
And from the southwest came the end of the world!

. . . . . .

"Is it cold on deck?" said Dauber. "Is it cold?
We're sheeted up, I tell you, inches thick!
The fo'c'sle's like a wedding-cake, I'm told.
Now tumble out, my sons; on deck, here, quick!
Rouse out, away, and come and climb the stick.
I'm going to call the half-deck. Bosun! Hey!
Both topsails coming in. Heave out! Away!"

He went; the Dauber tumbled from his bunk,
Clutching the side. He heard the wind go past,
Making the great ship wallow as if drunk.
There was a shocking tumult up the mast.
"This is the end," he muttered, "come at last.
I've got to go aloft, facing this cold.
I can't. I can't. I'll never keep my hold.

"I cannot face the topsail yard again.
I never guessed what misery it would be."
The cramps and hot-ache made him sick with pain.
The ship stopped suddenly from a devilish sea,
Then, with a triumph of wash, a rush of glee,
The door burst in, and in the water rolled,
Filling the lower bunks, black, creaming, cold.

The lamp sucked out. "Wash!" went the water back,
Then in again, flooding; the Bosun swore.
"You useless thing! You Dauber! You lee slack!
Get out, you heekapoota! Shut the door!
You coo-ilyaira, what are you waiting for?
Out of my way, you thing—you useless thing!"
He slammed the door indignant, clanging the ring.

And then he lit the lamp, drowned to the waist;
"Here's a fine house! Get at the scupper-holes"—
He bent against it as the water raced—
"And pull them out to leeward when she rolls.
They say some kinds of landsmen don't have souls.
I well believe. A Port Mahon baboon
Would make more soul than you got with a spoon."

Down in the icy water Dauber groped
To find the plug; the racing water sluiced
Over his head and shoulders as she sloped.
Without, judged by the sound, all hell was loosed.
He felt cold Death about him tightly noosed;
That Death was better than the misery there
Iced on the quaking foothold high in air.

And then the thought came: "I'm a failure. All
My life has been a failure. They were right.
It will not matter if I go and fall;
I should be free then from this hell's delight.
I'll never paint. Best let it end to-night.
I'll slip over the side. I've tried and failed."
So in the ice-cold in the night he quailed.

Death would be better, death, than this long hell
Of mockery and surrender and dismay—
This long defeat of doing nothing well,
Playing the part too high for him to play.
"O Death! who hides the sorry thing away,
Take me; I've failed. I cannot play these cards."
There came a thundering from the topsail yards.

---

[1] *fairleads.* Rings through which the rigging runs.

And then he bit his lips, clenching his mind,
And staggered out to master, beating back
The coward frozen self of him that whined.
Come what cards might, he meant to play the pack.
"Ai!" screamed the wind; the topsail sheet went clack;
Ice filled the air with spikes; the gray-backs burst.
"Here's Dauber," said the Mate, "on deck the first.

"Why, holy sailor, Dauber, you're a man!
I took you for a soldier. Up now, come!"
Up on the yards already they began
That battle with a gale which strikes men dumb.
The leaping topsail thundered like a drum.
The frozen snow beat in the face like shots.
The wind spun whipping wave-crests into clots.

So up upon the topsail yard again,
In the great tempest's fiercest hour, began
Probation to the Dauber's soul, of pain
Which crowds a century's torment in a span.
For the next month the ocean taught this man,
And he, in that month's torment, while she wested,
Was never warm nor dry, nor full nor rested.

But still it blew, or, if it lulled, it rose
Within the hour and blew again; and still
The water as it burst aboard her froze.
The wind blew off an ice-field, raw and chill,
Daunting man's body, tampering with his will;
But after thirty days a ghostly sun
Gave sickly promise that the storms were done.

A great gray sea was running up the sky,
Desolate birds flew past; their mewings came
As that lone water's spiritual cry,
Its forlorn voice, its essence, its soul's name.
The ship limped in the water as if lame;
Then in the forenoon watch to a great shout
More sail was made, the reefs were shaken out.

A slant came from the south; the singers stood
Clapped to the halliards, hauling to a tune,
Old as the sea, a fillip to the blood.
The upper topsail rose like a balloon.
"So long, Cape Stiff. In Valparaiso soon,"
Said one to other, as the ship lay over,
Making her course again—again a rover.

Slowly the sea went down as the wind fell.
Clear rang the songs, "Hurrah! Cape Horn is bet!"[1]
The combless seas were lumping into swell;
The leaking fo'c'sles were no longer wet.
More sail was made; the watch on deck was set
To cleaning up the ruin broken bare
Below, aloft, about her, everywhere.

The Dauber, scrubbing out the round-house, found
Old pantiles pulped among the mouldy gear,
Washed underneath the bunks and long since drowned
During the agony of the Cape Horn year.
He sang in scrubbing, for he had done with fear—
Fronted the worst and looked it in the face;
He had got manhood at the testing-place.

(1912)

THE STAR*

SARA TEASDALE

A white star born in the evening glow
Looked to the round green world below,
And saw a pool in a wooded place
That held like a jewel her mirrored face.
She said to the pool: "Oh, wondrous deep,
I love you, I give you my light to keep.
Oh, more profound than the moving sea
That never has shown myself to me!
Oh, fathomless as the sky is far,
Hold forever your tremulous star!"

But out of the woods as night grew cool
A brown pig came to the little pool;

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* Reprinted from a volume called "Rivers to the Sea," published by the Macmillan Company, and reprinted by special permission.

[1] *bet.* Beaten.

It grunted and splashed and waded in,
And the deepest place but reached its chin.
The water gurgled with tender glee
And the mud churned up in it turbidly.

The star grew pale and hid her face
In a bit of a floating cloud like lace.

(1915)

has not included any supernatural elements

THE FINDING OF JAMIE*

JOHN G. NEIHARDT

[This is the last section of a modern epic called *The Song of Hugh Glass,* dealing with men concerned in the hunting and trapping adventures of the American fur-trade in the Northwest. The incidents of the poem occurred in 1823-25. Jamie, young and golden-haired, was the devoted friend of the old hunter, Hugh Glass, who had once saved his life in a fight with the Ree Indians. Hugh, alone on the range near the Grand River, had been attacked by a bear and wounded almost to death; Jamie, finding him, watched alone with the unconscious man through the night, and then for three more nights in company with friends. Recovery seeming hopeless, Jamie's companion, Jules, dug a grave for Hugh, but still he did not die. Finally, when there was danger of an attack by Indians, Jamie was persuaded to leave his friend and rejoin, with Jules, the main body of the men; they took with them Hugh's gun, flint, and knife. At length, coming to himself, and finding that he had been deserted and robbed, the wounded man crawled across the plain to the Missouri River, where he built a raft and drifted down to Kiowa. Convinced that Jamie had been a traitor to him, he set out to find him, at first with only vengeance in his heart. It should be noticed that the poet seeks to present not only the epic story of the hunters in the primitive era of the Northwest, but also what may be called the epic march of nature, of the seasons, on the great plains.]

The country of the Crows
Through which the Big Horn and the Rosebud run,[1]
Sees over mountain-peaks the setting sun;
And southward from the Yellowstone flung wide,
It broadens ever to the morning side
And has the Powder on its vague frontier.
About the subtle changing of the year,
Ere even favored valleys felt the stir
Of Spring, and yet expectancy of her
Was like a pleasant rumor all repeat
Yet none may prove, the sound of horses' feet
Went eastward through the silence of that land.
For then it was there rode a little band
Of trappers out of Henry's Post,[2] to bear
Dispatches down to Atkinson, and there
To furnish out a keelboat for the Horn.
And four went lightly, but the fifth seemed worn
As with a heavy heart; for that was he
Who should have died but did not.

Silently
He heard the careless parley of his men,
And thought of how the Spring should come again,
That garish strumpet with her world-old lure,
To waken hope where nothing may endure,
To quicken love where loving is betrayed.
Yet now and then some dream of Jamie made
Slow music in him for a little while;
And they who rode beside him saw a smile
Glimmer upon that ruined face of gray,
As on a winter fog the groping day
Pours glory through a momentary rift.
Yet never did the gloom that bound him lift;
He seemed as one who feeds upon his heart,
And finds, despite the bitter and the smart,
A little sweetness and is glad for that.

Now up the Powder, striking for the Platte[3]
Across the bleak divide the horsemen went;
Attained that river where its course is bent
From north to east: and spurring on apace
Along the wintry valley, reached the place
Where from the west flows in the Laramie.
Thence, fearing to encounter with the Ree,
They headed eastward through the barren land,
To where, fleet-footed down a track of sand,

---

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[1] *Big Horn . . . Rosebud.* These rivers (and the Powder) are in—what is now—southeastern Montana.

[2] *Henry's Post.* At the junction of the Yellowstone and Big Horn rivers.

[3] *the Platte.* In eastern Wyoming.

The Niobrara[1] races for the morn—
A gaunt-loined runner. Here at length was born
Upon the southern slopes the baby Spring,
A timid, fretful, ill-begotten thing,
A-suckle at the Winter's withered paps:
Not such as when announced by thunder-claps
And ringed with swords of lightning, she would ride,
The haughty victrix and the mystic bride,
Clad splendidly as never Sheba's Queen,
Before her marching multitudes of green
In many-bannered triumph! Grudging, slow,
Amid the fraying fringes of the snow
The bunch-grass sprouted; and the air was chill.
Along the northern slopes 'twas winter still,
And no root dreamed what Triumph over Death
Was nurtured now in some bleak Nazareth
Beyond the crest to sunward. On they spurred
Through vacancies that waited for the bird,
And everywhere the Odic[2] Presence dwelt.
The Southwest blew, the snow began to melt;
And when they reached the valley of the Snake,
The Niobrara's ice began to break,
And all night long and all day long it made
A sound as of a random cannonade
With rifles snarling down a skirmish line.

The geese went over. Every tree and vine
Was dotted thick with leaf-buds when they saw
The little river of Keyapaha
Grown mighty for the moment. Then they came,
One evening when all thickets were aflame
With pale green witch-fires, and the windflowers blew,
To where the headlong Niobrara threw
His speed against the swoln Missouri's flank
And hurled him roaring to the further bank—
A giant staggered by a pigmy's sling.
Thence, plunging ever deeper into Spring,
Across the greening prairie east by south
They rode, and, just above the Platte's wide mouth,
Came, weary with the trail, to Atkinson.[3]
There all the vernal wonder-work was done:
No care-free heart might find aught lacking there. . . .
Might not the sad forget,
The happy here have nothing more to seek?
Lo, yonder, by that pleasant little creek,
How one might loll upon the grass and fish,
And build the temple of one's wildest wish
'Twixt nibbles! Surely there was quite enough
Of wizard-timber and of wonder-stuff
To rear it nobly to the blue-domed roof!

Yet there was one whose spirit stood aloof
From all this joyousness—a gray old man,
No nearer now than when the quest began
To what he sought on that long winter trail.
Aye, Jamie had been there; but when the tale
That roving trappers brought from Kiowa[4]
Was told to him, he seemed as one who saw
A ghost, and could but stare on it, they said:
Until one day he mounted horse and fled
Into the North, a devil-ridden man.
"I've got to go and find him if I can,"
Was all he said for days before he left.

And what of Hugh? So long of love bereft,
So long sustained and driven by his hate,
A touch of ruth now made him desolate.
No longer eager to avenge the wrong,
With not enough of pity to be strong
And just enough of love to choke and sting,
A gray old hulk amid the surge of Spring
He floundered on a lee-shore of the heart.
But when the boat was ready for the start
Up the long watery stairway to the Horn,
Hugh joined the party. And the year was shorn

---

[1] *the Niobrara.* In northwestern Nebraska.

[2] *Odic.* Mysteriously magnetic (from a supposed vital force called *od*).

[3] *Atkinson.* Near the present Fort Calhoun, Nebraska.

[4] *Kiowa.* On the Missouri River, about three miles above the mouth of the White, in what is now southern South Dakota.

Of blooming girlhood as they forged amain
Into the North; the late green-mantled plain
Grew sallow; and the ruthless golden shower
Of Summer wrought in lust upon the flower
That withered in the endless martyrdom
To seed. The scarlet quickened on the plum
About the Heart's mouth[1] when they came thereto;
Among the Mandans[2] grapes were turning blue,
And they were purple at the Yellowstone.
A frosted scrub-oak, standing out alone
Upon a barren bluff top, gazing far
Above the crossing at the Powder's bar,[3]
Was spattered with the blood of Summer slain.
So it was Autumn in the world again,
And all those months of toil had yielded naught
To Hugh. (How often is the seeker sought
By what he seeks—a blind, heart-breaking game!)
For always had the answer been the same
From roving trapper and at trading-post:
Aye, one who seemed to stare upon a ghost
And followed willy-nilly where it led,
Had gone that way in search of Hugh, they said—
A haggard, blue-eyed, yellow-headed chap.
And often had the old man thought, "Mayhap
He'll be at Henry's Post and we shall meet;
And to forgive and to forget were sweet:
'Tis for its nurse that Vengeance whets the tooth!
And oh the golden time of Jamie's youth,
That it should darken for a graybeard's whim!"
So Hugh had brooded, till there came on him
The pity of a slow rain after drouth.

But at the crossing of the Rosebud's mouth
A shadow fell upon his growing dream.
A band of Henry's traders, bound down stream,
Who paused to traffic in the latest word—
Down-river news for matters seen and heard
In higher waters—had not met the lad,
Nor yet encountered anyone who had.
Alas, the journey back to yesterwhiles!
How tangled are trails! The stubborn miles,
How wearily they stretch! And if one win
The long way back in search of what has been,
Shall he find aught that is not strange and new?
Thus wrought the melancholy news in Hugh,
As he turned back with those who brought the news;
For more and more he dreaded now to lose
What doubtful seeking rendered doubly dear.
And in the time when keen winds stripped the year
He came with those to where the Poplar[4] joins
The greater river. There Assiniboines,
Rich from the summer's hunting, had come down
And flung along the flat their ragged town,
That traders might bring goods and winter there.

So leave the heartsick graybeard. Otherwhere
The final curtain rises on the play.
'Tis dead of winter now. For day on day
The blizzard wind has thundered, sweeping wide
From Mississippi to the Great Divide
Out of the North beyond Saskatchewan.
Brief evening glimmers like an inverse dawn
After a long white night. The tempest dies;
The snow-haze lifts. Now let the curtain rise
Upon Milk River valley, and reveal
The stars like broken glass on frosted steel

---

[1] *the Heart's mouth.* In North Dakota (now the site of Bismarck).

[2] *Mandans.* Villages of the Mandan Indians, on the Missouri River, near the mouth of the Knife.

[3] *Powder's bar.* Again in Montana.

[4] *the Poplar.* That is, the junction of the Poplar and the Missouri; Hugh returns with the trappers to (what is now) northeastern Montana.

Above the Piegan lodges, huddled deep
In snowdrifts, like a freezing flock of sheep.
A crystal weight, the dread cold crushes down,
And no one moves about the little town,
That seems to grovel as a thing that fears.
But see! a lodge-flap swings; a squaw appears,
Hunched with the sudden cold. Her footsteps creak
Shrill in the hush. She stares upon the bleak,
White skyline for a moment, then goes in.
We follow her, push back the flap of skin,
Enter the lodge, inhale the smoke-tanged air
And blink upon the little faggot-flare
That blossoms in the centre of the room.
Unsteady shadows haunt the outer gloom
Wherein the walls are guessed at. Upward, far,
The smoke-vent now and then reveals a star
As in a well. The ancient squaw, a-stoop,
Her face light-stricken, stirs a pot of soup
That simmers with a pleasant smell and sound.
A gnarled old man, cross-legged upon the ground,
Sits brooding near. He feeds the flame with sticks;
It brightens. Lo, a leaden crucifix
Upon the wall! These heathen eyes, though dim,
Have seen the white man's God and cling to Him,
Lest on the sunset trail slow feet should err.
But look again. From yonder bed of fur
Beside the wall a white man strives to rise.
He lifts his head, with yearning sightless eyes
Gropes for the light. A mass of golden hair
Falls round the face that sickness and despair
Somehow make old, albeit he is young.
His weak voice, stumbling to the mongrel tongue
Of traders, flings a question to the squaw:
"You saw no Black Robe?[1] Tell me what you saw!"
And she, brief-spoken as her race, replies:
"Heaped snow—sharp stars—a kiote on the rise."
The blind youth huddles moaning in the furs.
The firewood spits and pops, the boiled pot purrs
And sputters. On this little isle of sound
The sea of winter silence presses round—
One feels it like a menace. Now the crone
Dips out a cup of soup, and, having blown
Upon it, takes it to the sick man there
And bids him eat. With wild, unseeing stare
He turns upon her: "Why are they so long?
I cannot eat! I've done a mighty wrong;
It chokes me! Oh, no, no, I must not die
Until the Black Robe comes!" His feeble cry
Sinks to a whisper. "Tell me, did they go—
Your kinsmen?" "They went south before the snow."
"And will they tell the Black Robe?" "They will tell."
The crackling of the faggots for a spell
Seems very loud. Again the sick man moans
And, struggling with the weakness in his bones,
Would gain his feet, but cannot. "Go again,
And tell me that you see the bulks of men
Dim in the distance there." The squaw obeys;
Returns anon to crouch beside the blaze,
Numb-fingered and a-shudder from the night.
The vacant eyes that hunger for the light
Are turned upon her: "Tell me what you saw!
Or maybe snowshoes sounded up the draw.[2]
Quick, tell me what you saw and heard out there!"
"Heaped snow—sharp stars—big stillness everywhere."

One clutching at thin ice with numbing grip
Cries while he hopes; but when his fingers slip,
He takes the final plunge without a sound.
So sinks the youth now, hopeless. All around
The winter silence presses in; the walls
Grow vague and vanish in the gloom that crawls

---

[1] *Black Robe.* Priest.

[2] *draw.* Ravine or canyon.

Close to the failing fire. The Piegans sleep.
Night hovers midway down the morning steep.
The sick man drowses. Nervously he starts
And listens; hears no sound except his heart's
And that weird murmur brooding stillness makes.
But stealthily upon the quiet breaks—
Vague as the coursing of the hearer's blood—
A muffled, rhythmic beating, thud on thud,
That, growing nearer, deepens to a crunch.
So, hungry for the distance, snowshoes munch
The crusted leagues of Winter, stride by stride.
A camp-dog barks; the hollow world outside
Brims with the running howl of many curs.
Now wide-awake, half risen in the furs,
The youth can hear low voices and the creak
Of snowshoes near the lodge. His thin, wild shriek
Startles the old folk from their slumberings:
"He comes! The Black Robe." Now the door-flap swings,
And briefly one who splutters Piegan bars
The way, then enters. Now the patch of stars
Is darkened with a greater bulk that bends
Beneath the lintel. "Peace be with you, friends!
And peace with him herein who suffers pain!"
So speaks the second comer of the twain—
A white man by his voice. And he who lies
Beside the wall, with empty, groping eyes
Turned to the speaker: "There can be no peace
For me, good Father, till this gnawing cease—
The gnawing of a great wrong I have done."

The big man leans above the youth: "My son—"
(Grown husky with the word, the deep voice breaks,
And for a little spell the whole man shakes
As with the clinging cold) "have faith and hope!
'Tis often nearest dawn when most we grope.
Does not the Good Book say, Who seek shall find?"

"But, Father, I am broken now and blind,
And I have sought, and I have lost the way."
To which the stranger: "What would Jesus say?
Hark! In the silence of the heart 'tis said—
By their own weakness are the feeble sped;
The humblest feet are surest for the goal;
The blind shall see the City of the Soul;
Lay down your burden at His feet to-night."

Now while the fire, replenished, bathes in light
The young face scrawled with suffering and care,
Flinging ironic glories on the hair
And glinting on dull eyes that once flashed blue,
The sick one tells the story of old Hugh
To him whose face, averted from the glow,
Still lurks in gloom. The winds of battle blow
Once more along the steep. Again one sees
The rescue from the fury of the Rees,
The graybeard's fondness for the gay lad; then
The westward march with Major Henry's men
With all that happened there upon the Grand.

"And so we hit the trail of Henry's band,"
The youth continues; "for we feared to die:
And dread of shame was ready with the lie
We carried to our comrades. Hugh was dead
And buried there beside the Grand, we said.
Could any doubt that what we said was true?
They even praised our courage! But I knew!

The nights were hell because I heard his cries,
And saw the crows a-pecking at his eyes,
The kiotes tearing at him. O my God!
I tried and tried to think him under sod;
But every time I slept it was the same.
And then one night—I lay awake—he came!
I saw he came—I know I hadn't slept!
Amid a light like rainy dawn, he crept
Out of the dark upon his hands and knees.
The wound he got that day among the Rees
Was like red fire. A snarl of bloody hair
Hung round the eyes that had a pleading stare,
And down the ruined face and gory beard
Big tear-drops rolled. He went as he appeared,
Trailing a fog of light that died away.
And I grew old before I saw the day.
O Father, I had paid too much for breath!
The Devil traffics in the fear of death,
And may God pity anyone who buys
What I have bought with treachery and lies—
This rat-like gnawing in my breast!—I knew
I couldn't rest until I buried Hugh;
And so I told the Major I would go
To Atkinson with letters, ere the snow
Had choked the trails. Jules wouldn't come along;
He didn't seem to realize the wrong;
He called me foolish, couldn't understand.
I rode alone—not south, but to the Grand.
Daylong my horse beat thunder from the sod,
Accusing me; and all my prayers to God
Seemed flung in vain at bolted gates of brass.
And in the night the wind among the grass
Hissed endlessly the story of my shame.
I do not know how long I rode: I came
Upon the Grand at last, and found the place;
And it was empty! Not a sign or trace
Was left to show what end had come to Hugh.
And oh that grave! It gaped upon the blue,
A death-wound pleading dumbly for the slain!
I filled it up, and fled across the plain,
And somehow came to Atkinson at last.
And there I heard the living Hugh had passed
Along the river northward in the fall!
O Father, he had found the strength to crawl
That long, heart-breaking distance back to life,
Though Jules had taken blanket, steel and knife,
And I, his trusted comrade, had his gun!
They said I'd better stay at Atkinson,
Because old Hugh was surely hunting me,
White-hot to kill. I did not want to flee,
Or hide from him. I even wished to die,
If so this aching cancer of a lie
Might be torn out forever. So I went,
As eager as the homesick homeward bent,
In search of him and peace. But I was cursed.
For even when this stolen rifle burst
And spewed upon me this eternal night,
I might not die as any other might;
But God so willed that friendly Piegans came,
To spare me yet a little unto shame.
O Father, is there any hope for me?"

"Great hope indeed, my son!" so huskily
The other answers. "I recall a case
Like yours—no matter what the time and place—
'Twas somewhat like the story that you tell;
Each seeking and each sought, and both in hell;
But, in the tale I mind, they met at last."

The youth sits up, white-faced and breathing fast:
"They met, you say? What happened? Quick! Oh, quick!"
"The old man found the dear lad blind and sick.
And both forgave—'twas easy to forgive—
For oh we have so short a time to live"—

Whereat the youth: "Who's here? The Black Robe's gone!
Whose voice is this?"

The gray of winter dawn,
Now creeping round the door-flap, lights the place
And shows thin fingers groping for a face
Deep-scarred and hoary with the frost of years,
Whereover runs a new springtide of tears.
"O Jamie, Jamie, Jamie—I am Hugh!
There was no Black Robe yonder—Will I do?"
(1915)

PART TWO

LYRICAL AND REFLECTIVE POEMS

LYRICAL AND REFLECTIVE POEMS

HEART-EXCHANGE

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

My true-love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange one for another given:
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,
There never was a better bargain driven:
  My true-love hath my heart, and I have his.

His heart in me keeps him and me in one,
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides:
He loves my heart, for once it was his own,
I cherish his because in me it bides:
  My true-love hath my heart, and I have his.

(1589)

WHO IS SYLVIA

(From *Two Gentlemen of Verona*)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Who is Sylvia? what is she?
  That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise is she;
  The heaven such grace did lend her,
That she might admirèd be.

Is she kind as she is fair?
  For beauty lives with kindness.
Love doth to her eyes repair
  To help him of his blindness,
And, being helped, inhabits there.

Then to Sylvia let us sing,
  That Sylvia is excelling:
She excels each mortal thing
  Upon the dull earth dwelling:
To her let us garlands bring.

(1598)

O SWEET CONTENT

THOMAS DEKKER

Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?
    O sweet content!
Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexèd?
    O punishment!
Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexèd
To add to golden numbers, golden numbers?
O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!
  Work apace, apace, apace, apace;
  Honest labor bears a lovely face;
Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny!

Canst drink the waters of the crispèd spring?
    O sweet content!
Swimm'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own tears?
    O punishment!
Then he that patiently want's burden bears
No burden bears, but is a king, a king!
O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!
  Work apace, apace, apace, apace;
  Honest labor bears a lovely face;
Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny!

(1599)

BLOW, BLOW, THOU WINTER WIND

(From *As You Like It*)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
  As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen
Because thou art not seen,
  Although thy breath be rude.

Heigh ho! sing heigh ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then heigh ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly!

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,[1]
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not.
Heigh ho! sing heigh ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then heigh ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly!

(1599)

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

(From *As You Like It*)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn[2] his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat—
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats
And pleased with what he gets—
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

(1599)

O MISTRESS MINE

(From *Twelfth Night*)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

O Mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O stay and hear! your true-love's coming,
That can sing both high and low;
Trip no further, pretty sweeting,
Journeys end in lovers meeting—
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty,—
Then come kiss me, Sweet-and-twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

(1601)

HARK, HARK! THE LARK

(From *Cymbeline*)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phœbus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes:
With everything that pretty bin,
My lady sweet, arise:
Arise, arise!

(1609)

SONNETS

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

[Shakespeare's sonnets were not arranged or published by himself. In the only collection we have of them, those here given are numbered 29, 30, 73, 74, 106, 116. It is not known to what friend or friends they were addressed.]

When, in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,—
Haply I think on thee: and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising

---

[1] *warp.* Change (by freezing).
[2] *turn.* Shape, fit.

From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate:
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:[1]
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancelled woe,
And moan the expense[2] of many a vanished sight:
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell[3] o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoanèd[4] moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before:
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

That time of year thou may'st in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs,[5] where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.[6]
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

But be contented: when that fell[7] arrest
Without all bail shall carry me away,
My life hath in this line some interest,[8]
Which for memorial still with thee shall stay.
When thou reviewest this, thou dost review
The very part was[9] consecrate to thee:
The earth can have but earth, which is his due;
My spirit is thine, the better part of me:
So then thou hast but lost the dregs of life,
The prey of worms, my body, being dead;
The coward conquest of a wretch's[10] knife,
Too base of thee to be rememberèd.
The worth of that is that which it contains,
And that is this,[11] and this with thee remains.

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,[12]
And beauty making beautiful old rime,
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights;
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have expressed
Even such a beauty as you master[13] now.
So all their praises are but prophecies[14]
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;
And, for they looked but with divining eyes,

---

[1] Newly mourn the loss of precious time long filled with sorrows.

[2] *expense.* Loss.

[3] *tell.* Count.

[4] *fore-bemoaned.* Already uttered.

[5] *choirs.* The portions of cathedrals where service was sung.

[6] Choked by the ashes of that which once fed the flame.

[7] *fell.* Fatal.

[8] *interest.* Right (to remembrance).

[9] *part was.* Part which was.

[10] *wretch.* Perhaps Death with his scythe.

[11] *that is this.* My spirit is my writings.

[12] *wights.* Men and women.

[13] *master.* Possess.

[14] Because what they saw was only a dim vision of the future.

They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no! it is an ever-fixèd mark[1]
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height[2] be taken.
Love's not Time's fool,[3] though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom:
If this be error, and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

(1609)

CHARACTER OF A HAPPY LIFE

SIR HENRY WOTTON

How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armor is his honest thought
And simple truth his utmost skill!

Whose passions not his masters are,
Whose soul is still[4] prepared for death,
Untied unto the world by care
Of public fame, or private breath;[5]

Who envies none that chance doth raise
Nor vice; who never understood
How deepest wounds are given by praise;
Nor rules of state[6] but rules of good:

Who hath his life from rumors freed.
Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruin make oppressors great;

Who God doth late and early pray
More of His grace than gifts to lend;
And entertains the harmless day
With a religious book or friend;

—This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall;
Lord of himself, though not of lands;
And having nothing, yet hath all.

(1614)

IT IS NOT GROWING LIKE A TREE

BEN JONSON

[This is a strophe taken from an ode written in memory of Sir Henry Morison.]

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make man better be;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere:
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night—
It was the plant and flower of Light.
In small proportions we just beauties see,
And in short measures life may perfect be.

(1616)

TO CELIA

BEN JONSON

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup
And I'll not look for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honoring thee
As giving it a hope that there
It could not withered be;
But thou thereon didst only breathe,
And sent'st it back to me;
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
Not of itself but thee!

(1616)

---

[1] *mark.* Sea-mark.
[2] *height.* Altitude, calculated by navigators.
[3] *fool.* Dupe.
[4] *still.* Always.
[5] *breath.* Gossip.
[6] *state.* Politics.

SONNET Shakespearian.

MICHAEL DRAYTON

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part,—
Nay I have done, you get no more of me!
And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free;
Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.

Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
When his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And Innocence is closing up his eyes:
—Now if thou would'st, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover!

(1619)

THE CRIER

MICHAEL DRAYTON

Good folk, for gold or hire,
But help me to a crier;
For my poor heart is run astray
After two eyes that passed this way.
O yes, O yes, O yes,
If there be any man
In town or country can
Bring me my heart again,
I'll please him for his pain.
And by these marks I will you show
That only I this heart do owe:[1]
It is a wounded heart,
Wherein yet sticks the dart;
Every piece sore hurt throughout it;
"Faith" and "Troth" writ round about it.
It was a tame heart and a dear,
And never used to roam;
But having got this haunt,[2] I fear
'Twill hardly stay at home.
For God's sake, walking by the way,
If you my heart do see,
Either impound it for a stray
Or send it back to me.

(1619)

---

[1] *owe.* Own.

[2] *haunt.* Habit.

VIRTUE

GEORGE HERBERT

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky!
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night;
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue, angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,[1]
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My music shows ye have your closes,[2]
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives;
But, though the whole world turn to coal,[3]
Then chiefly lives.

(1633)

LOVE

GEORGE HERBERT

[This poem expresses the experience of a penitent Christian, whose soul is conceived of as a guest in the house of Divine Love. The second and third stanzas are a dialogue between guest and Host.]

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lack'd anything.

"A guest," I answered, "worthy to be here:"
Love said, "You shall be he."
"I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on Thee!"
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
"Who made the eyes but I?"

---

[1] Because blinded by the very brilliancy of its color.

[2] *closes.* The poet plays on the technical use of the term—the end of a musical phrase.

[3] *coal.* Burning fuel (not the modern coal).

"Truth, Lord; but I have marred them: let my shame
Go where it doth deserve."
"And know you not," says Love, "who bore the blame?"
"My dear, then I will serve."
"You must sit down," says Love, "and taste my meat."
So I did sit and eat.

(1633)

THE PULLEY

GEORGE HERBERT

When God at first made Man,
Having a glass of Blessings standing by,
"Let us," said he, "pour on him all we can:
Let the world's riches, which dispersèd lie,
Contract into a span."

So Strength first made a way;
Then Beauty flowed; then Wisdom, Honor, Pleasure.
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that, alone of all his treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

"For if I should," said he,
"Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;
So both should losers be.

"Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast."

(1633)

L'ALLEGRO

JOHN MILTON

[The title means "The Cheerful Man," as opposed to the subject of the companion poem, "Il Penseroso," "The Sober (Reflective) Man." From line 11 to the end the theme may be said to be Mirth, personified in Euphrosyne.]

Hence, loathèd Melancholy,
Of Cerberus[1] and blackest midnight born
In Stygian cave forlorn,
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings
And the night raven sings;
There, under ebon shades and low-browed rocks
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert[2] ever dwell.
But come, thou goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclept[3] Euphrosyne,
And by men, heart-easing Mirth,
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth
With two sister Graces more,
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore:
Or whether (as some sager[4] sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora[5] playing
As he met her once a-Maying,
There, on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful Jollity,
Quips and cranks[6] and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks[7] and wreathèd smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's[8] cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it as ye go,
On the light fantastic toe;

---

[1] *Cerberus.* The monster-guard of the gates of the Stygian under-world (Hades).

[2] *Cimmerian desert.* Near Hades, supposed to be always hidden in mist.

[3] *yclept.* Called.

[4] *sager.* More wisely.

[5] *Zephyr with Aurora.* The West Wind with the Dawn.

[6] *Quips and Cranks.* Fanciful, witty sayings.

[7] *Becks.* Salutations (with hand or head).

[8] *Hebe.* Goddess of youth.

And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty;
And if I give thee honor due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her and live with thee,
In unreprovèd pleasures free;
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-brier or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine,[1]
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before;
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill.
Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate
Where the great sun begins his state
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight.[2]
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale[3]
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
  Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures
Whilst the landscape round it measures:
Russet lawns, and fallows[4] gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The laboring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied,[5]
Shallow brooks and rivers wide;
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure[6] of neighboring eyes.
Hard by a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis[7] met
Are at their savory dinner set
Of herbs and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phyllis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tanned haycock in the mead.
Sometimes, with secure delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks[8] sound
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the chequered shade,
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat:
How fairy Mab the junkets eat;
She[9] was pinched and pulled, she said;
And he, by friar's lantern[10] led,
Tells how the drudging goblin[11] sweat
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When, in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-laborers could not end;
Then lies him down the lubber fiend,
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength.
And, crop-full, out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
  Towered cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds[12] of peace high triumphs hold
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence,[13] and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.
There let Hymen[14] oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask[15] and antique pageantry;

[1] *eglantine.* Honeysuckle.

[2] *dight.* Decked.

[3] *tells his tale.* Counts his full number (of sheep).

[4] *fallows.* Untilled places.

[5] *pied.* Spotted.

[6] *cynosure.* Center of regard.

[7] *Corydon and Thyrsis.* Typical names of pastoral characters; so also Phyllis and Thestylis.

[8] *rebecks.* Fiddles.

[9] *She.* The girl who tells the fairy stories; the following "he" is another narrator.

[10] *friar's lantern.* The will-o'-the-wisp light.

[11] *goblin.* Robin Goodfellow, who it was said would work for any who would set for him a bowl of cream.

[12] *weeds.* Garments.

[13] *influence.* Like that supposed to proceed from the stars.

[14] *Hymen.* God of marriage.

[15] *mask.* A musical pageant-play.

Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learnèd sock[1] be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild;
And ever, against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs[2]
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce
In notes with many a winding bout[3]
Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out,
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,[4]
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' self may heave[5] his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice.[6]
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

(1634)

IL PENSEROSO

JOHN MILTON

[The subject of this poem is the pleasures of Melancholy, in contrast with those of Mirth. By Melancholy, however, we must understand a milder, less darkened mood than that which the word now expresses; Pensiveness would be rather closer to the Miltonic notion. In like manner, the word "sad" in Milton's time (as in lines 43 and 103) meant only *serious.*]

Hence, vain deluding Joys,
  The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bested,[7]
  Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
  And fancies fond[8] with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
  As the gay motes that people the sunbeams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
  The fickle pensioners[9] of Morpheus' train.
But hail, thou Goddess sage and holy,
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight;
And therefore to our weaker view
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's[10] sister might beseem,
Or that starred Ethiop queen[11] that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The sea-nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-haired Vesta,[12] long of yore,
To solitary Saturn[13] bore;
His daughter she (in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain)
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.
  Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain[14]
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole[15] of cypress-lawn[16]
Over thy decent[17] shoulders drawn.
Come, but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till,
With a sad leaden downward cast,
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses, in a ring,
Aye round about Jove's altar sing.
And add to these retirèd Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;

---

[1] *sock.* The Greek shoe which was symbol of comedy.

[2] *Lydian airs.* A form of Greek music, soft and effeminate.

[3] *bout.* Turn.

[4] The music is light and free, but produced by care (heed) and skill.

[5] *heave.* Raise.

[6] Orpheus had won his way into Hades to rescue his wife Eurydice, through the power of his music, but lost her on the way out.

[7] *bested.* Benefit.

[8] *fond.* Foolish.

[9] *pensioners.* Followers. *Morpheus* was god of dreams.

[10] *Memnon.* An ancient king of Ethiopia.

[11] *Ethiop queen.* Cassiopeia.

[12] *Vesta.* Goddess of the hearth.

[13] *Saturn.* A god who reigned in Mt. Ida, Crete, but was dispossessed by his son Jove.

[14] *grain.* Dye.

[15] *stole.* Scarf.

[16] *cypress-lawn.* A thin crape.

[17] *decent.* Modest.

But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon[1] soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
The Cherub Contemplation;[2]
And the mute Silence hist[3] along,
'Less Philomel[4] will deign a song
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia[5] checks her dragon yoke
Gently o'er the accustomed oak.
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among
I woo, to hear thy even-song;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon,
Riding near her highest noon,[6]
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
And oft, as if her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removèd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm.[7]
  Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,[8]
With thrice great Hermes,[9] or unsphere[10]
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook,
And of[11] those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,
Whose power hath a true consent[12]
With planet or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy,
In sceptred pall, come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,[13]
Or the tale of Troy divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennoblèd hath the buskined[14] stage.

  But, O sad virgin, that thy power
Might raise Musæus[15] from his bower;
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,[16]
And made Hell grant what Love did seek;
Or call up him that left half-told[17]
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous[18] ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride;
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of tourneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.[19]
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited[20] Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced[21] as she was wont
With the Attic boy[22] to hunt,
But kerchieft in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute-drops from off the eaves.
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan[23] loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke

---

[1] *yon.* Yonder.

[2] *Contemplation.* Pronounce "Contempla-she-on."

[3] *hist.* Lead softly.

[4] *Philomel.* The nightingale.

[5] *Cynthia.* The moon, conceived as driving a team of dragons.

[6] *noon.* Zenith.

[7] The bellman, or night watchman, often ended his call of the hours with a benediction.

[8] *Bear.* The constellation of the Great Dipper, which remains in the sky all night.

[9] *thrice great Hermes.* Hermes Trismegistus, a mythical writer of books on magic arts.

[10] *unsphere.* Draw from his celestial sphere.

[11] *of.* To tell of.

[12] *consent.* Agreement.

[13] Stories told in tragedies by Æschylus and Sophocles.

[14] *buskined.* Tragic (the buskin being the symbol of tragedy as the sock was of comedy).

[15] *Musæus.* A Greek poet.

[16] See note on *L'Allegro*, line 150.

[17] The reference is to Chaucer's unfinished "Squire's Tale."

[18] *virtuous.* Powerful (magically).

[19] This may refer to Spenser's *Faerie Queene.*

[20] *civil-suited.* Plainly dressed (like a civilian).

[21] *frounced.* Curled.

[22] *Attic boy.* Cephalus, loved by Aurora, goddess of morning.

[23] *Sylvan.* A forest god.

Was never heard the nymphs to daunt
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There in close covert by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee, with honeyed thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep;
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream[1]
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid.
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some spirit to mortals good,
Or th' unseen genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,[2]
And love the high embowèd[3] roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,[4]
And storied windows richly dight,[5]
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced choir below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell[6]
Of every star that Heaven doth show,
And every herb that sips the dew,
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

(1634)

DEATH

JOHN DONNE

Death, be not proud, though some have callèd thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death: nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy picture be,
Much pleasure, then from thee much more must flow;
And soonest our best men with thee do go—
Rest of their bones, and souls' delivery!
Thou'rt slave to Fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well,
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And Death shall be no more. Death, thou shalt die!

Yet a elegy

(1635)

LYCIDAS

JOHN MILTON

Artistic [illegible]
Not [illegible]

[This is a formal elegy in the conventional pastoral form, supposed to be sung by a shepherd in honor of a dead companion (notice that the singer is described in the concluding lines, 186-193), but really uttering the thoughts of Milton concerning his friend, Edward King, who was drowned while crossing the Irish Sea in 1637. The framework of the poem, then, is in the classical tradition: the laurels, myrtles, and ivy of the opening lines are symbols of the poetic art; there is a formal address to the Muses (line 15), there are references to the pastoral poet Theocritus of Sicily, who had sung of Arethusa and Alpheus (lines 85, 132-33), and to Virgil, who had celebrated the river Mincius (86); the art of poetry is symbolized as that of shepherds (65), and the life of ease as one of sporting with shepherdesses (67-69). On the other hand, Milton blends with this classical material allusions to English places, persons, and conditions. The island of Mona and the River Dee (54-55) stand for the coast of Wales, near which King was drowned; the "hill" and "flock" of 23-24 stand for Cambridge University, where the poet and his friend were students together, and Camus (103) is the River Cam at Cambridge; Damœtas (36) is supposed to represent some Cambridge friend or tutor. Still more striking is the Miltonic blending of Christian with classical theology; thus in lines 81-84 he sets forth his personal faith in the divine Judge of his work as poet, and in 172-181 describes the Christian heaven, with the "nuptial song" of the Marriage of the Lamb. The fact that King was to enter the Church also gave him opportunity to introduce the long passage on the state of the times (114-131), and, in his own words, to foretell "the ruin of our corrupted clergy, then in their height," under the symbol of false shepherds whose poetry (123-4) is as bad as their doctrines (125-7). The wolf of 128 is supposed to be the Roman Catholic Church, and the two-handed weapon of 130 the new Reformation of Milton's time (perhaps called two-handed because of the two Houses of Parliament).]

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,

---

[1] Come softly before my eyes, trembling in a stream of visions at the movement of Sleep's wings.
[2] *pale.* Precincts. [3] *embowed.* Vaulted.
[4] *massy proof.* Massively strong.
[5] *dight.* Decked. [6] *spell.* Study.

I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew[1]
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter[2] to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.
Begin then, Sisters of the sacred well
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:
So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favor my destined urn,
And as he passes turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud.
For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;
Together both, ere the high lawns[3] appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the gray-fly[4] winds her sultry horn,
Battening[5] our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose at evening, bright,
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,
Tempered to the oaten flute;
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long;
And old Damœtas loved to hear our song.
But O the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone, and never must return!
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes, mourn.
The willows and the hazel copses green
Shall now no more be seen,
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling[6] herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white-thorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.
Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream.
Ay me, I fondly dream!
Had ye been there—for what could that have done?
What could the Muse[7] herself that Orpheus bore,
The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament,
When by the rout that made the hideous roar
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the Swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
Alas! what boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon[8] when we hope to find,

---

[1] *knew.* Knew how.
[2] *welter.* Be tossed.
[3] *lawns.* Pastures.
[4] *gray-fly.* Trumpet-fly, heard especially at summer noon.
[5] *battening.* Feeding.
[6] *weanling.* Newly weaned.
[7] Calliope was mother of Orpheus. He was slain by the infuriated Thracian Bacchantes, and his head thrown into the River Hebrus.
[8] *guerdon.* Reward.

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And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorrèd shears,[1]
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
Phœbus[2] replied, and touched my trembling ears:
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil[3]
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumor lies;
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."
  O fountain Arethuse, and thou honored flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,
That strain I heard was of a higher mood:
But now my oat[4] proceeds,
And listens to the herald[5] of the sea,
That came in Neptune's plea[6]
He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?
And questioned every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beakèd promontory:
They knew not of his story;
And sage Hippotades[7] their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed;
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope[8] with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
  Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,[9]
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower[10] inscribed with woe.
"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"[11]
Last came, and last did go,
The pilot[12] of the Galilean lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitred[13] locks, and stern bespake:
"How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as for their bellies' sake
Creep and intrude and climb into the fold!
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
What recks[14] it them? What need they? They are sped;[15]
And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel[16] pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
But that two-handed engine[17] at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."
  Return, Alpheus; the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast

---

[1] Atropos, the third of the Fates.
[2] *Phœbus.* Apollo, god of poets.
[3] *foil.* Gold-leaf.
[4] *oat.* Flute (cf. line 33).
[5] *herald.* Triton.
[6] To inquire in Neptune's name.
[7] *Hippotades.* Æolus, god of winds.
[8] *Panope.* A sea-nymph.
[9] *sedge.* Of reeds.
[10] The hyacinth, whose petals were said by the Greeks to be lettered "Ai, ai" (alas!), in memory of the youth from whose blood it had sprung.
[11] *pledge.* Child.
[12] St. Peter, reputed to carry the keys of heaven (see *Matthew* 16:19).
[13] *mitred.* Wearing a bishop's head-dress.
[14] *recks it.* Does it concern.
[15] *are sped.* Prosper.
[16] *scrannel.* Harsh.
[17] *engine.* Instrument.

Their bells and flowrets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use[1]
Of shades and wanton winds and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star[2] sparely[3] looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe[4] primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffodillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse[5] where Lycid lies.
For so to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise,
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous[6] world;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows[7] denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus[8] old,
Where the great vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.[9]
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth;
And O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.[10]
Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor;
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks[11] his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive[12] nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius[13] of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth[14] swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals gray;
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric[15] lay:
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,

---

[1] *use.* Are found.
[2] *swart star.* Dog-star, symbolic of heat.
[3] *sparely.* Sparingly.
[4] *rathe.* Early.
[5] *laureate hearse.* Laureled tomb.
[6] *monstrous.* Full of monsters.
[7] *moist vows.* Tearful prayers.
[8] *Fable of Bellerus.* Fabled Bellerus, a name made from Bellerium, the Latin name for the point of Cornwall called Land's End. Here is the mount (line 161) called St. Michael, said to be guarded by the archangel.
[9] *hold.* Castle. Namancos and Bayona were in Spain.
[10] Dolphins had carried Arion to shore when he was thrown overboard.
[11] *tricks.* Arranges (like decorations).
[12] *unexpressive.* Inexpressible.
[13] *Genius.* Good spirit.
[14] *uncouth.* Unknown.
[15] *Doric.* Pastoral.

And now was dropped into the western bay.
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.

(1638)

SONG

SIR JOHN SUCKLING

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
  Prithee, why so pale?
Will, when looking well can't move her,
  Looking ill prevail?
  Prithee, why so pale?

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
  Prithee, why so mute?
Will, when speaking well can't win her,
  Saying nothing do't?
  Prithee, why so mute?

Quit, quit for shame! This will not move;
  This cannot take her.
If of herself she will not love,
  Nothing can make her:
  The devil take her!

(1638)

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED TO THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

Sonn

JOHN MILTON

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
Perhaps my semblance[1] might deceive the truth,
That I to manhood am arrived so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.[2]
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even[3]
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven:
All is, if I have grace to see it so,
As ever in my great Taskmaster's eye.

Final text

(1645)

THE HOLY NATIVITY

A Hymn Sung as by the Shepherds

RICHARD CRASHAW

[The poem as it stands here is only a portion of a much longer composition. In part it was written to represent a dialogue between two of the shepherds: "Tityrus" utters stanzas 1 and 4, "Thyrsis" stanzas 2 and 5, while both sing the third.]

Tityrus

Gloomy night embraced the place
  Where the noble Infant lay.
The Babe looked up and showed his face;
  In spite of darkness, it was day.
It was thy day, Sweet! and did rise,
Not from the East, but from thine eyes.

Thyrsis

Winter chid aloud, and sent
  The angry North to wage his wars.
The North forgot his fierce intent,
  And left perfumes instead of scars.
By those sweet eyes' persuasive powers,
Where he meant frost, he scattered flowers.

We saw thee in thy balmy nest,
  Young dawn of our eternal day!
We saw thine eyes break from their East,
  And chase the trembling shades away.
We saw thee, and we blessed the sight;
We saw thee by thine own sweet light.

Poor world, said I, what wilt thou do
  To entertain this starry Stranger?
Is this the best thou canst bestow,—
  A cold and not too cleanly manger?
Contend, the powers of heaven and earth,
To fit a bed for this huge birth.

---

[1] *semblance*. Youthful appearance.
[2] *endu'th*. Endoweth.
[3] *be . . . even*. Correspond.

Thyrsis'

Proud world, said I, cease your contest,
And let the mighty Babe alone.
The phœnix builds the phœnix' nest,[1]
Love's architecture is his own.
The Babe whose birth embraves this morn
Made his own bed ere He was born.

(1646)

CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING

ROBERT HERRICK

Get up, get up for shame! the blooming morn
Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.[2]
See how Aurora throws her fair
Fresh-quilted colors through the air;
Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see
The dew bespangling herb and tree.
Each flower has wept and bowed toward the east
Above an hour since: yet you not dressed;
Nay! not so much as out of bed?
When all the birds have matins said
And sung their thankful hymns, 'tis sin,
Nay, profanation, to keep in,
Whenas a thousand virgins on this day
Spring, sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.[3]

Rise and put on your foliage, and be seen
To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh and green,
And sweet as Flora. Take no care
For jewels for your gown or hair:
Fear not; the leaves will strew
Gems in abundance upon you:
Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,
Against you come, some orient pearls unwept;
Come and receive them while the light
Hangs on the dew-locks of the night:
And Titan[4] on the eastern hill
Retires himself, or else stands still
Till you come forth. Wash, dress, be brief in praying:
Few beads[5] are best when once we go a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come; and, coming, mark
How each field turns a street, each street a park
Made green and trimmed with trees; see how
Devotion gives each house a bough
Or branch: each porch, each door ere this
An ark, a tabernacle is,
Made up of white-thorn, neatly interwove;
As if here were those cooler shades of love.
Can such delights be in the street
And open fields and we not see't?
Come, we'll abroad; and let's obey
The proclamation made for May
And sin no more, as we have done, by staying;
But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl this day
But is got up, and gone to bring in May.
A deal of youth, ere this, is come
Back, and with white-thorn laden home.
Some have despatched their cakes and cream
Before that we have left to dream:
And some have wept, and wooed, and plighted troth,
And chose their priest, ere we can cast off sloth:
Many a green-gown[6] has been given;
Many a kiss, both odd and even:
Many a glance, too, has been sent
From out the eye, love's firmament;
Many a jest told of the keys betraying
This night, and locks picked, yet we're not a-Maying.

Come, let us go while we are in our prime;
And take the harmless folly of the time!
We shall grow old apace, and die
Before we know our liberty.
Our life is short, and our days run
As fast away as does the sun;
And, as a vapor or a drop of rain,
Once lost, can ne'er be found again,
So when or you or I are made
A fable, song, or fleeting shade,
All love, all liking, all delight
Lies drowned with us in endless night.

---

[1] The phœnix was a mythical bird said to live for centuries; at length it would build a nest, set fire to it, and find a new birth after being consumed in the flames.

[2] *god unshorn.* The sun with all his beams.

[3] *May.* May-blossoms (especially hawthorn).

[4] *Titan.* The sun-god.

[5] *beads.* Prayers.

[6] *green-gown.* Tumble on the grass.

Then while time serves, and we are but decaying,
Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

(1648)

A THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR HIS HOUSE

ROBERT HERRICK

Lord, thou hast given me a cell
Wherein to dwell,
A little house, whose humble roof
Is weatherproof,
Under the spars[1] of which I lie
Both soft and dry;
Where thou, my chamber for to ward,
Hast set a guard
Of harmless thoughts, to watch and keep
Me while I sleep.
Low is my porch, as is my fate,
Both void of state;
And yet the threshold of my door
Is worn by th' poor,
Who thither come and freely get
Good words or meat.
Like as my parlor, so my hall
And kitchen's small;
A little buttery, and therein
A little bin,
Which keeps my little loaf of bread
Unchipped, unflead;[2]
Some brittle sticks of thorn or briar
Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coal I sit,
And glow like it.
Lord, I confess too, when I dine,
The pulse is thine,
And all those other bits that be
There placed by thee;
The worts,[3] the purslane, and the mess
Of watercress,
Which of thy kindness thou hast sent;
And my content
Makes those, and my beloved beet,
To be more sweet.
'Tis thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
With guiltless mirth,
And giv'st me wassail[4] bowls to drink,
Spiced to the brink.
Lord, 'tis thy plenty-dropping hand
That soils my land,
And giv'st me, for my bushel sown,
Twice ten for one;
Thou mak'st my teeming hen to lay
Her egg each day;
Besides my healthful ewes to bear
Me twins each year;
The while the conduits of my kine
Run cream, for wine.
All these, and better, thou dost send
Me, to this end,
That I should render, for my part,
A thankful heart,
Which, fired with incense, I resign,
As wholly thine;
But the acceptance—that must be,
My Christ, by Thee.

(1648)

---

[1] *spars.* Beams.
[2] *unflead.* Unflayed (by mice).
[3] *worts.* Roots.
[4] *wassail.* Festal.

ON JULIA'S CLOTHES

ROBERT HERRICK

Whenas in silks my Julia goes
Then, then (methinks) how sweetly flows
That liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes and see
That brave vibration each way free;
O how that glittering taketh me!

(1648)

TO DAFFODILS

ROBERT HERRICK

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon:
As yet the early-rising Sun
Has not attained his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the evensong;
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay
As you, or anything.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the Summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew
Ne'er to be found again.

(1648)

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Sung to the King in the Presence at Whitehall

ROBERT HERRICK

What sweeter music can we bring
Than a carol, for to sing
The birth of this our heavenly King?
Awake the voice! Awake the string!
Heart, ear, and eye, and every thing,
Awake! the while the active finger
Runs division[1] with the singer.

Dark and dull night, fly hence away,
And give the honor to this day
That sees December turned to May.

If we may ask the reason, say
The why and wherefore all things here
Seem like the spring-time of the year?

Why does the chilling winter's morn
Smile like a field beset with corn,
Or smell like to a mead new-shorn,
Thus on the sudden?

Come and see
The cause why things thus fragrant be.
'Tis He is born, whose quickening birth
Gives life and lustre, public mirth,
To heaven and the under earth.

We see Him come, and know Him ours,
Who, with his sunshine and his showers,
Turns all the patient ground to flowers.

The Darling of the world is come,
And fit it is we find a room
To welcome Him.

The nobler part
Of all the house here is the heart,
Which we will give Him, and bequeath
This holly and this ivy wreath,
To do Him honor, who's our King,
And Lord of all this reveling.

(1648)

---

[1] *division.* A rapid musical passage sung (usually) to a single syllable.

TO LUCASTA, ON GOING TO THE WARS

RICHARD LOVELACE

Tell me not, Sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As you too shall adore;
I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
Loved I not Honor more.

(1649)

TO ALTHEA FROM PRISON

RICHARD LOVELACE

[Lovelace was twice a prisoner as the result of his devotion to King Charles I.]

When Love with unconfinèd wings
Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
To whisper at the grates;
When I lie tangled in her hair
And fettered to her eye,
The gods that wanton in the air
Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round
With no allaying[1] Thames,
Our careless heads with roses bound,
Our hearts with loyal flames;
When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
When healths and draughts go free—
Fishes that tipple in the deep
Know no such liberty.

When (like committed[2] linnets) I
With shriller throat shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty
And glories of my King;
When I shall voice aloud how good
He is, how great should be,
Enlargèd[3] winds, that curl the flood,
Know no such liberty.

---

[1] *allaying.* Diluting.
[2] *committed.* Imprisoned.
[3] *Enlarged.* Free.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
  Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
  That for an hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love
  And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
  Enjoy such liberty.

(1649)

SONG

JAMES SHIRLEY

The glories of our blood and state
  Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armor against fate;
  Death lays his icy hand on kings:
    Sceptre and crown
    Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
  And plant fresh laurels where they kill:
But their strong nerves at last must yield;
  They tame but one another still:
    Early or late
    They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow;
  Then boast no more your mighty deeds;
Upon Death's purple altar now
  See where the victor-victim bleeds:
    Your heads must come
    To the cold tomb;
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in their dust.

(1659)

ON HIS BLINDNESS

JOHN MILTON

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,—
"Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"
I fondly[1] ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies: "God doth not need
Either man's work or His own gifts: who best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best: His state
Is kingly; thousands at His bidding speed,
And post[2] o'er land and ocean without rest:—
They also serve who only stand and wait."

(1673)

SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY, 1687

JOHN DRYDEN

[St. Cecilia was the patron saint of music, particularly organ music, and a musical society in London used to celebrate her feast day, November 22, with a choral concert. Dryden wrote this and the following ode for these celebrations; that for 1687 was set to music by the Italian composer Draghi. The poet bases his conception on an old philosophic theory that the atoms of the universe were first set in order by means of musical harmony, and continued to form "the music of the spheres." At the close he unites with this idea the Christian theme of the Day of Judgment, imagining that the sound of the divine Trumpet will be the concluding note of this music of creation. The notion that an angel appeared to Cecilia at her music was a part of the legend of that saint.]

From harmony, from heavenly harmony
    This universal frame began:
  When Nature underneath a heap
    Of jarring atoms lay, Chaos
  And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
    "Arise, ye more than dead!"
Then cold and hot and moist and dry[3]
In order to their stations leap,
    And Music's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony
    This universal frame began:
    From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason[4] closing full in Man.

---

[1] *fondly.* Foolishly.
[2] *post.* Hasten.
[3] The four kinds of natural substances, according to ancient science.
[4] *diapason.* The compass of an instrument.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell!
When Jubal[1] struck the chorded shell
His listening brethren stood around,
And, wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound.
Less than a god they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell!

2 music

The trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.
The double double double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries "Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!"

The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion
For the fair disdainful dame.

But Oh! what art can teach,
What human voice can reach,
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race,
And trees uprooted left their place
Sequacious[2] of the lyre
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:
When to her Organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appeared,
Mistaking earth for heaven.

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blest above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.

(1693)

ALEXANDER'S FEAST

OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC

JOHN DRYDEN

[The St. Cecilia's Day ode for 1697. Dryden found among the ancient stories of Alexander the Great a mention of Timotheus, a musician who had deeply stirred the king when playing before him. He develops this legend in strophes 2-6, imagining the succession of Timotheus's themes and their effect on the royal listener; in the last stanza the invention of the organ by St. Cecilia is regarded as a still greater triumph, in view of the legend already referred to in the Ode for 1687 (line 53).]

I

'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son:
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne;
His valiant peers were placed around,
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound
(So should desert in arms be crowned);
The lovely Thais by his side
Sate like a blooming Eastern bride
In flower of youth and beauty's pride:—
Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair!

II

Timotheus, placed on high
Amid the tuneful choir,
With flying fingers touched the lyre:
The trembling notes ascend the sky
And heavenly joys inspire
The song began from[3] Jove,
Who left his blissful seats above—
Such is the power of mighty love!
A dragon's fiery form belied[4] the god;
Sublime[5] on radiant spires[6] he rode
When he to fair Olympia pressed,
And while he sought her snowy breast;

---

[1] *Jubal.* See *Genesis* iv, 21: "The father of all such as handle the harp or the organ."
[2] *sequacious of.* Following.
[3] *began from.* First treated of.
[4] *belied.* Disguised.
[5] *Sublime.* High.
[6] *spires.* Coils.

Then round her slender waist he curled,
And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign of the world.
—The listening crowd admire the lofty sound;
"A present deity!" they shout around:
"A present deity!" the vaulted roofs rebound:
With ravished ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,[1]
Affects to nod
And seems to shake the spheres.

III

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician sung,
Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young:
The jolly god in triumph comes;
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums!
Flushed with a purple grace
He shows his honest face:
Now gives the hautboys[2] breath; he comes, he comes!
Bacchus, ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain;
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

IV

Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain;
Fought all his battles o'er again,
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain!
The master saw the madness rise,
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;
And, while he heaven and earth defied,
Changed his hand and checked his pride.
He chose a mournful Muse
Soft pity to infuse:
He sung Darius[3] great and good,
By too severe a fate
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood;
Deserted at his utmost need
By those his former bounty fed;
On the bare earth exposed he lies
With not a friend to close his eyes.
—With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolving in his altered soul
The various turns of chance below;
And now and then a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

V

The mighty master smiled, to see
That love was in the next degree;
'Twas but a kindred sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.
Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,[4]
Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.
War, he sung, is toil and trouble,
Honor but an empty bubble;
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying;
If the world be worth thy winning,
Think, O think it worth enjoying:
Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee!
—The many rend the skies with loud applause;
So Love was crowned, but Music won the cause.
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again:
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

VI

Now strike the golden lyre again:
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain!
Break his hands of sleep asunder,
And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark, hark! the horrid sound
Has raised up his head:
As awaked from the dead,
And amazed, he stares around.
"Revenge, revenge!" Timotheus cries,
"See the Furies arise!
See the snakes that they rear
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!

---

[1] That is, assumes for the moment the character of Jove, whose nod shook heaven and earth.

[2] *hautboys.* Oboes.

[3] *Darius.* The Persian king whom Alexander had overthrown.

[4] *Lydian measures.* A soft and effeminate type of Greek music.

Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain:
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew!
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes,
And glittering temples of their hostile gods!"
—The princes applaud with a furious joy:
And the King seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy!

VII

Thus, long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,
While organs yet were mute,
Timotheus, to his breathing flute
And sounding lyre
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire
At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;[1]
The sweet enthusiast from her sacred store
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,[2]
With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
—Let old Timotheus yield the prize
Or both divide the crown;
He raised a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down!

(1697)

THE SPACIOUS FIRMAMENT ON HIGH

JOSEPH ADDISON

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.
Th' unwearied Sun from day to day
Does his Creator's power display;
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.
Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The Moon takes up the wondrous tale;
And nightly to the listening Earth
Repeats the story of her birth:
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball;
What though nor real voice nor sound
Amidst their radiant orbs be found?
In Reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice;
Forever singing as they shine,
"The hand that made us is divine."

(1712)

RULE BRITANNIA

JAMES THOMSON

When Britain first at Heaven's command
Arose from out the azure main,[3]
This was the charter of her land,
And guardian angels sung the strain:
Rule, Britannia! Britannia rules the waves!
Britons never shall be slaves.

The nations not so blest as thee
Must in their turn to tyrants fall,
Whilst thou shalt flourish great and free
The dread and envy of them all.

Still more majestic shalt thou rise,
More dreadful from each foreign stroke;
As the loud blast that tears the skies
Serves but to root thy native oak.

Thee haughty tyrants ne'er shall tame;
All their attempts to bend thee down
Will but arouse thy generous flame,
And work their woe and thy renown.

To thee belongs the rural reign;
Thy cities shall with commerce shine;
All thine shall be the subject main,
And every shore it circles, thine?

---

[1] *vocal frame.* Organ.

[2] It is characteristic of the organ to prolong sounds beyond the power of any other instrument.

[3] *main.* Sea.

The Muses, still[1] with Freedom found,
  Shall to thy happy coast repair;
Blest Isle, with matchless beauty crowned,
  And manly hearts to guard the fair:—
Rule, Britannia! Britannia rules the waves!
    Britons never shall be slaves!

(1740)

ODE

WRITTEN IN 1746

WILLIAM COLLINS

[In memory of British soldiers who fell in the War of the Austrian Succession, 1745-46.]

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallowed mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung,
By forms unseen their dirge is sung:
There Honor comes, a pilgrim gray,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And Freedom shall awhile repair
To dwell, a weeping hermit, there!

(1746)

ODE TO EVENING

no rhyme

WILLIAM COLLINS

If aught of oaten stop[2] or pastoral song
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
  Like thy own solemn springs,
  Thy springs, and dying gales;

O Nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
  With brede[3] ethereal wove,
  O'erhang his wavy bed;

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing,
  Or where the beetle winds
  His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum,—
  Now teach me, maid composed,
  To breathe some softened strain,

personification

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale,
May not unseemly with its stillness suit;
  As, musing slow, I hail
  Thy genial loved return!

For when thy folding-star[4] arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
  The fragrant Hours, and elves
  Who slept in flowers the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,
  The pensive Pleasures sweet,
  Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed pile
  Or upland follows gray
  Reflect its last cool gleam.

But when chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut
  That, from the mountain's side,
  Views wilds, and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
  Thy dewy fingers draw
  The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve;
  While Summer loves to sport
  Beneath thy lingering light;

While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves;
Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
  Affrights thy shrinking train
  And rudely rends thy robes;

---

[1] *still.* Always.
[2] *oaten stop.* Shepherd's pipe.
[3] *brede.* Embroidery.

[4] *folding-star.* The star that marked the time for taking in the flocks.

So long, regardful of thy quiet rule
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, rose-lipped Health,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And hymn thy favorite name!

(1746)

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

THOMAS GRAY

[The churchyard was that of Stoke Pogis, where the poet himself was eventually buried. His indolent and meditative habits are described in lines 101-107; for his "melancholy" (line 120) compare the note on Milton's *Il Penseroso.*]

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe[1] has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour:[2]—
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn[3] or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honor's voice provoke[4] the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

---

[1] *glebe.* Sod.
[2] *Await . . . hour.* The inevitable hour awaits.
[3] *storied urn.* Decorated burial urn.
[4] *provoke.* Arouse.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial[1] current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden,[2] that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton, here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade; nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.[3]

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor[4] of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unlettered Muse,[5]
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.[6]

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Ee'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ee'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonored dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate,
If chance,[7] by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn,
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noon-tide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

---

[1] *genial.* Lively, warm.
[2] *Hampden.* A Puritan leader who resisted Charles I.
[3] Write flattering verses for proud patrons.
[4] *tenor.* Course.
[5] *unlettered Muse.* Village poets.
[6] *to die.* How to die (piously).
[7] *chance.* Perchance.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies, he would rove;
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

"One morn I missed him on the customed hill,
Along the heath, and near his favorite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next, with dirges due, in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne,—
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon agèd thorn."

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown;
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,[1]
And Melancholy marked him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere;
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear;
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),
The bosom of his Father and his God.

(1751)

---

[1] His humble birth did not prevent his love of learning.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

[In this poem Goldsmith pictured the experiences of his childhood, Auburn being generally identified with Lissoy, his early Irish home, and the village parson with his father or uncle. The neighborhood in question had suffered in recent years from a tyrannical landlord (line 37), who had evicted many tenants, and Goldsmith regarded this as typical of the encroachments of the land-holding class, and, in general, of the growth of commerce and luxury at the expense of rural life and an equitable distribution of goods.]

Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain;
Where health and plenty cheered the laboring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed:
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene!
How often have I paused on every charm,
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topped the neighboring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade
For talking age and whispering lovers made!
How often have I blessed the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labor free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed;
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown
By holding out to tire each other down;

The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place;
The bashful virgin's side-long looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove:
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please:
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed:
These were thy charms—but all these charms are fled.
Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn.
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain.
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, choked with sedges, works its weedy way;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries;
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall;
And trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land.
Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made:
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.
A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man;
For him light labor spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no more:
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.
But times are altered; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain;
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,
And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that asked but little room,
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
Lived in each look, and brightened all the green;
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.
Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here, as I take my solitary rounds
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined grounds,
And, many a year elapsed, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes, with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.
In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose:
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill,
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;

And, as a hare whom hounds and horns pursue
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past.
Here to return—and die at home at last.
O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How happy he who crowns in shades like these
A youth of labor with an age of ease;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;
No surly porter stands in guilty state,
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending Virtue's friend;
Bends to the grave with unperceived decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way;
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past!
Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.
There, as I passed with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came softened from below;
The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young,
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,
The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind[1];—
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And filled each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown foot-way tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widowed, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring:
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.
Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden-flower grows wild,—
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change, his place;
Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train;
He chid their wanderings but relieved their pain;
The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away,

---

[1] *vacant mind.* Half-witted or idiotic children were familiar sights in villages of Goldsmith's time, and were not viewed as repulsive.

Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.
Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings leaned to Virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all;
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.
Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismayed,
The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.
At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools who came to scoff remained to pray.
The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;
Even children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth expressed,
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed:
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven;
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Tho' round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.
Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view;
I knew him well, and every truant knew;
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper circling round
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned.
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault.
The village all declared how much he knew:
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge;[1]
In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,
For, even tho' vanquished, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.
But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumphed is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,
Where graybeard mirth and smiling toil retired,

---

[1] *gauge.* Judge the capacity of casks, etc.

Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlor splendors of that festive place:
The white-washed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnished clock that ticked behind the door:
The chest, contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules,[1] the royal game of goose;[2]
The hearth, except when winter chilled the day,
With aspen boughs and flowers and fennel gay;
While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.
Vain transitory splendors! could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart.
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be pressed,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.
  Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art.
Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed—
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And, e'en while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks if this be joy.
  Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey
The rich man's joy increase, the poor's decay,
'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from the shore;
Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains! This wealth is but a name,
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds:
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighboring fields of half their growth;
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green:
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies;

---

[1] *rules.* Rules for conduct in public houses, attributed to Charles I.

[2] *goose.* A game played with counters and dice, not unlike "parcheesi."

While thus the land, adorned for pleasure all,
In barren splendor feebly waits the fall.
As some fair female, unadorned and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slights every borrowed charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes;
But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress,—
Thus fares the land by luxury betrayed:
In nature's simplest charms at first arrayed,
But verging to decline, its splendors rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;
While, scourged by famine from the smiling land,
The mournful peasant leads his humble band,
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms—a garden and a grave.
Where then, ah! where, shall poverty reside,
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
If to some common's fenceless limits strayed,
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And even the bare-worn common is denied.
If to the city sped—what waits him there?
To see profusion that he must not share;
To see ten thousand baneful arts combined
To pamper luxury and thin mankind;
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know
Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.
Here while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies his sickly trade;
Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
The dome where Pleasure holds her midnight reign
Here, richly decked, admits the gorgeous train:
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
Sure these denote one universal joy!
Are these thy serious thoughts?—Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty bless'd,
Has wept at tales of innocence distressed;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn:
Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinched with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.
Do thine, sweet Auburn,—thine, the loveliest train,—
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain
Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread!
Ah, no! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama[1] murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charmed before
The various terrors of that horrid shore;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day;

---

[1] *Altama.* The Altamaha River, in Georgia, vaguely used for American settlements; but Goldsmith confuses them with those of more tropical regions.

Those matted woods, where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crowned,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
And savage men more murderous still than they;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only sheltered thefts of harmless love.
  Good Heaven! what sorrows gloomed that parting day,
That called them from their native walks away;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round the bowers, and fondly looked their last,
And took a long farewell, and wished in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main,
And shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Returned and wept, and still returned to weep.
The good old sire the first prepared to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wished for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And blessed the cot where every pleasure rose,
And kissed her thoughtless babes with many a tear
And clasped them close, in sorrow doubly dear,
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.
  O luxury! thou cursed by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchanged are things like these for thee!
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasure only to destroy!
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigor not their own.
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
Till, sapped their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down, they sink, and spread a ruin round.
  Even now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done;
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land.
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented Toil, and hospitable Care,
And kind connubial Tenderness, are there;
And Piety with wishes placed above,
And steady Loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still[1] first to fly where sensual joys invade;
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame;
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;

---

[1] *Still.* Always.

Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!
Farewell, and oh! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,[1]
Whether where equinoctial fervors glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigors of the inclement clime;
Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain;
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him that states of native strength possessed,
Tho' very poor, may still be very blest;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labored mole[2] away;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

(1770)

THE JACKDAW

WILLIAM COWPER

(From a Latin poem by Vincent Bourne)

There is a bird, who, by his coat,
And by the hoarseness of his note,
  Might be supposed a crow;
A great frequenter of the church,
Where bishop-like he finds a perch,
  And dormitory too.

Above the steeple shines a plate,
That turns and turns to indicate
  From what point blows the weather;
Look up—your brains begin to swim,
'Tis in the clouds—that pleases him;
  He chooses it the rather.

Satire

Fond of the speculative height,
Thither he wings his airy flight,
  And thence securely sees
The bustle and the raree-show[3]
That occupy mankind below,
  Secure and at his ease.

You think, no doubt, he sits and muses
On future broken bones and bruises,
  If he should chance to fall.
No; not a single thought like that
Employs his philosophic pate,
  Or troubles it at all.

He sees that this great roundabout,
The world, with all its motley rout,
  Church, army, physic, law,
Its customs, and its businesses,
Are no concern at all of his,
  And says—what says he?—"Caw."

Thrice happy bird! I too have seen
Much of the vanities of men;
  And, sick of having seen 'em,
Would cheerfully these limbs resign
For such a pair of wings as thine,
  And such a head between 'em.

(1782)

Satire upon mankind ([illegible])

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[1] In Sweden or Ecuador.
[2] *mole.* Embankment.
[3] *raree-show.* Peep-show.

TO A LOUSE

On Seeing One on a Lady's Bonnet at Church

ROBERT BURNS

Ha! whaur ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie?[1]
Your impudence protects you sairly;[2]
I canna say but ye strunt[3] rarely,
    Owre gauze and lace;
Tho', faith! I fear ye dine but sparely
    On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin, blastit wonner,
Detested, shunn'd by saunt an' sinner,
How daur ye set your fit upon her—
    Sae fine a lady?
Gae somewhere else, and seek your dinner
    On some poor body.

Swith![4] in some beggar's hauffet squattle;[5]
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle,[6]
Wi' ither kindred jumping cattle,
    In shoals and nations;
Whaur horn nor bane[7] ne'er daur unsettle
    Your thick plantations.

---

[1] *crowlin ferlie.* Crawling wonder.
[2] *sairly.* Greatly.
[3] *strunt.* Strut.
[4] *Swith!* Quick!
[5] *hauffet squattle.* Head sprawl.
[6] *sprattle.* Struggle.
[7] *bane.* Bone (comb).

Now haud you there, ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rels,[1] snug and tight;
Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right
Till ye've got on it—
The vera tapmost, tow'rin height
O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump an' gray as ony grozet,[2]
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,[3]
Or fell, red smeddum,[4]
I'd gie you sic a hearty dose o't,
Wad dress your droddum.[5]

I wad na been surpris'd to spy
You on an auld wife's flainen toy;[6]
Or aiblens[7] some bit duddie[8] boy,
On's wyliecoat;[9]
But Miss's fine Lunardi![10] fye!
How daur ye do't?

O Jenny, dinna toss your head,
An' set your beauties a' abread!
Ye little ken what cursed speed
The blastie's makin!
Thae winks an' finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin!

O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae mony a blunder free us
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e[11] us
An' ev'n devotion!

(1786)

TO A MOUSE

On Turning her up in her Nest with the Plough, November, 1785

ROBERT BURNS

Wee, sleekit,[12] cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty
Wi' bickering brattle![13]
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee
Wi' murd'rin pattle![14]

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles,[15] but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen icker in a thrave[16]
'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,[17]
An' never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's[18] the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big[19] a new ane,
O' foggage[20] green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell[21] an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter[22] passed
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But[23] house or hald,[24]
To thole[25] the winter's sleety dribble
An' cranreuch[26] cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane[27]
In proving foresight may be vain;
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft a-gley,[28]
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me;
The present only toucheth thee:
But och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

(1786)

---

[1] *fatt'rels.* Ribbon ends.
[2] *grozet.* Gooseberry.
[3] *rozet.* Resin.
[4] *smeddum.* Powder.
[5] *droddum.* Back.
[6] *flainen toy.* Flannel cap.
[7] *aiblens.* Perhaps.
[8] *duddie.* Ragged.
[9] *wyliecoat.* Vest.
[10] *Lunardi.* Balloon-bonnet.
[11] *lea'e.* Leave.
[12] *sleekit.* Sleek.
[13] *bickering brattle.* Hurrying scamper.
[14] *pattle.* Ploughstaff.
[15] *whyles.* At times.
[16] An occasional ear of corn out of a set of twenty-four sheaves.
[17] *lave.* Remainder.
[18] *silly wa's.* Poor walls.
[19] *big.* Build.
[20] *foggage.* Herbage.
[21] *snell.* Sharp.
[22] *coulter.* Plough.
[23] *But.* Without.
[24] *hald.* Shelter.
[25] *thole.* Endure.
[26] *cranreuch.* Hoar-frost.
[27] *thy lane.* Alone.
[28] *a-gley.* Awry.

SCOTS WHA HAE

ROBERT BURNS

[An imagined address by Robert Bruce to his troops before the battle of Bannockburn, 1314. It was set to a tune which tradition said had been used as a march by the Scottish army at the time.]

Scots, wha hae[1] wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victory!

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slavery!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or freeman fa',
Let him follow me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will draw our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!—
Let us do or die!

(1794)

THE TIGER

WILLIAM BLAKE

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? What the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? What dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did He smile His work to see?
Did He who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

(1794)

A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT

ROBERT BURNS

Is there, for honest poverty,
That[1] hings his head, an' a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Our toils obscure, an' a' that;
The rank is but the guinea's stamp;
The man's the gowd[2] for a' that.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin grey,[3] an' a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man's a man for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their tinsel show, an' a' that;
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie,[4] ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a cuif[5] for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
His riband, star, an' a' that,
The man o' independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that.

---

[1] *wha hae.* Who have.

[1] *That.* Any who.
[2] *gowd.* Gold.
[3] *hoddin grey.* Coarse undyed woollen.
[4] *birkie.* Fellow.
[5] *cuif.* Fool.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an' a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
Guid faith, he mauna fa'[1] that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their dignities, an' a' that,
The pith o' sense, an' pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may
(As come it will for a' that),
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree,[2] an' a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's comin yet for a' that,
That man to man, the warld o'er,
Shall brithers be for a' that.

(1795)

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure:—
But the least motion which they made
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

(1798)

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES

CHARLES LAMB

I have had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school-days—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a love once, fairest among women;
Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man;
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like I paced round the haunts of my childhood,
Earth seem'd a desert I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces—

How some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

(1798)

---

[1] *mauna fa'*. Cannot accomplish. [2] *gree*. Prize.

HIGHLAND MARY

ROBERT BURNS

[The subject of the poem is Mary Campbell, a sailor's daughter, to whom Burns was attached for a time and who died suddenly on her way to a meeting with him.]

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie![1]
There Summer first unfald[2] her robes,
And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloomed the gay green birk,[3]
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasped her to my bosom!
The golden hours on angel wings
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me as light and life
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' monie a vow, and locked embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder;
But O, fell death's untimely frost,
That nipped my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft hae kissed sae fondly!
And closed for aye the sparkling glance
That dwelt on me sae kindly!
And mould'ring now in silent dust
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

(1799)

THREE YEARS SHE GREW IN SUN AND SHOWER

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Three years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake.—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

(1800)

---

[1] *drumlie.* Muddy.
[2] *unfald.* Unfold.
[3] *birk.* Birch.

SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
  Beside the springs of Dove,[1]
A Maid whom there were none to praise
  And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
  Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star when only one
  Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
  When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
  The difference to me!

(1800)

MY HEART LEAPS UP WHEN I BEHOLD

authors own reaction for nature

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

My heart leaps up when I behold
    A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
    Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.[2]

filial

(1807)

THE SOLITARY REAPER

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chant
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands;
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

(1807)

SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[This is a sketch of the character of the poet's wife.]

She was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

---

[1] *Dove.* A river.

[2] *piety.* Filial reverence.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;[1]
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength and skill;
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

(1807)

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company;
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

(1807)

ODE TO DUTY

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe:
From vain temptations dost set free:
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial[2] sense of youth:
Glad hearts! without reproach or blot
Who do thy work and know it not:
Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms dread Power! around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried,
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong.

---

[1] *machine.* Organism.

[2] *genial.* Natural.

poet want to be lifted up out of heaviness of life

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy bondman
let me live!

(1807)

expressed personal longing

TO A SKY-LARK

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

irregular

Take me up

Bird [illegible] harmonious?

Up with me! up with me into the
clouds!
For thy song, Lark, is strong;
Up with me, up with me into the
clouds!
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ring-
ing,
Lift me, guide me, till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!

I have walked through wildernesses
dreary
And to-day my heart is weary;
Had I now the wings of a Faery,
Up to thee would I fly.
There is madness about thee, and joy
divine
In that song of thine;
Lift me, guide me, high and high
To thy banqueting-place in the sky.

Joyous as morning
Thou art laughing and scorning;
Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy
rest,
And, though little troubled with sloth,
Drunken Lark! thou would'st be loth
To be such a traveller as I.
Happy, happy Liver,
With a soul as strong as a mountain
river
Pouring out praise to the Almighty
Giver,
Joy and jollity be with us both!

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,
Through prickly moors or dusty ways
must wind;
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
As full of gladness and as free of heav-
en,
I, with my fate contented, will plod on,
And hope for higher raptures, when
life's day is done.

(1807)

Imagination (kinds)

ODE

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[This poem was based on the writer's own experience of a childhood remarkably sensitive to spiritual "intimations." "I used to brood," he said, "over the stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost to persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated, in something of the same way, to heaven. With a feeling congenial to this I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence. . . . Many times when going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality" (compare lines 142-146). As to the idea of a pre-existent state of the soul, suggested in lines 59-66, Wordsworth said that he did not wish to be understood to propose it as a definite belief, but only to make use "as a poet" of the widespread instinctive notion of such a possibility.]

I

There was a time when meadow, grove,
and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now
can see no more.

II

The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose,
The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are
bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory
from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
  And while the young lambs bound
    As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief;
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
    And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,
The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
    And all the earth is gay;
      Land and sea
  Give themselves up to jollity,
    And with the heart of May
  Doth every beast keep holiday;—
    Thou child of joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blessèd creatures, I have heard the call
  Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
  My heart is at your festival,
    My head hath its coronal,[1]
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
  Oh evil day, if I were sullen
  While Earth herself is adorning,
    This sweet May-morning,
  And the children are culling
    On every side,
  In a thousand valleys far and wide,
  Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm:—
  I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
  —But there's a tree, of many, one,
A single field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
  The pansy at my feet
  Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
  Hath had elsewhere its setting,
    And cometh from afar:
  Not in entire forgetfulness,
  And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
  From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
  Upon the growing boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
  He sees it in his joy;
The youth, who daily farther from the east
  Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
  And by the vision splendid
  Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

[illegible] maturity of life [illegible]

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a mother's mind,
  And no unworthy aim,
  The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her foster-child, her inmate man,
  Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learnèd art;

---

[1] *coronal.* Wreath.

A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"[1]
With all the persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou,[2] whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy soul's immensity;
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
Mighty prophet! seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy immortality
Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
A presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?[3]
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction; not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest—
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,[4]
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing,
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor man nor boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather,
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

---

[1] *humorous stage.* Stage for character comedy—a reference to the old term, "comedy of humours."

[2] *Thou.* The child.

[3] A reference to the childish habits described in lines 91-108.

[4] Of the reality of what is perceived by the senses.

X

Then sing, ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now forever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye fountains, meadows, hills, and groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born day
Is lovely yet;
The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms[1] are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

(1807)

SONNETS

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPTEMBER 3, 1802

[illegible] the eye

Earth has not anything to show more fair;
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This city now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

LONDON, 1802

[Written after the poet's return from a visit to France. "I could not but be struck," he said, "with the vanity and parade of our own country, especially in great towns and cities, as contrasted with the quiet, and I may say the desolation, that the Revolution had produced in France."]

Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee; she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

---

[1] *palms.* Prizes.

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802

O friend! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being as I am, oppressed,
To think that now our life is only dressed
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone,—our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF

It is not to be thought of that the flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,—
That this most famous stream in bogs and sands
Should perish, and to evil and to good
Be lost forever. In our halls is hung
Armory of the invincible knights of old;
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spake, the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

(1807)

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND

A Naval Ode

THOMAS CAMPBELL

Ye mariners of England
That guard our native seas!
Whose flag has braved, a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze!
Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe!
And sweep through the deep
While the stormy winds do blow;
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave!—
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And Ocean was their grave:
Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell,[1]
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow!
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

---

[1] Admiral Robert Blake died at sea in 1657, and Nelson (at Trafalgar) in 1805.

Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is o'er the mountain waves,
Her home is on the deep;
With thunders from her native oak,
She quells the floods below,—
As they roar on the shore,
When the stormy winds do blow;
When the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn,
Till danger's troubled night depart,
And the star of peace return.
Then, then, ye ocean warriors!
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name
When the storm has ceased to blow;
When the fiery fight is heard no more,
And the storm has ceased to blow.

(1809)

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

LORD BYRON

[Written in honor of Lady Horton, whom Byron had seen in a mourning gown decorated with spangles.]

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

eye of poet as he looks upon her
One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear, their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

(1815)

KUBLA KHAN

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

[Written in 1797. According to the poet's account, he had taken an anodyne to relieve pain, and was reading in the old volume called *Purchas' Pilgrimage* how "the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built," when he fell asleep. He dreamed, and on awaking recollected the dream with intense clearness, beginning to write the poem as an account of it. He was presently interrupted by a business call, and on returning to his manuscript could remember nothing further, so left the poem unfinished. Kubla Khan was an Asiatic prince of the 13th century, who founded the Mongol dynasty in China.]

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion

Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in the tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

four
A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

(1816)

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

JOHN KEATS

[Keats had not had the advantage of a classical education; in this sonnet he records one of the episodes of intellectual awakening which he owed to friends who introduced him to the classics in translation.]

Much have I travel'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific — and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

(1816)

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET

JOHN KEATS

[This and the following sonnet were written by Keats and Hunt in friendly competition.]

The poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;
That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the lead
In summer luxury,—he has never done
With his delights; for when tired out with fun
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never;
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

(1817)

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TO THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE CRICKET

LEIGH HUNT

Green little vaulter in the sunny grass,
Catching your heart up at the feel of June,
Sole voice that's heard amidst the lazy noon,
When even the bees lag at the summoning brass;
And you, warm little housekeeper, who class
With those who think the candles come too soon,
Loving the fire, and with your tricksome tune
Nick the glad silent moments as they pass:
O sweet and tiny cousins, that belong,
One to the fields, the other to the hearth,
Both have your sunshine; both, though small, are strong
At your clear hearts; and both seem given to earth
To ring in thoughtful ears this natural song—
Indoors and out, summer and winter, Mirth.

(1817)

THANATOPSIS

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

[The title means "Vision of Death." In his collected poems Bryant adds the words: "Written in the poet's eighteenth year."]

To him who in the love of Nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language; for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides
Into his darker musings, with a mild
And healing sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When thoughts
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
Over thy spirit, and sad images
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart;—
Go forth, under the open sky, and list
To Nature's teachings, while from all around—
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air—
Comes a still voice—

Yet a few days, and thee
The all-beholding sun shall see no more
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,
Where thy pale form was laid, with many tears,
Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall claim
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up
Thine individual being, shalt thou go
To mix forever with the elements,
To be a brother to the insensible rock
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain
Turns with his share, and treads upon. The oak
Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy mould.

Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world—with kings,
The powerful of the earth—the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun,—the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between;
The venerable woods—rivers that move
In majesty, and the complaining brooks
That make the meadows green; and, poured round all,
Old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste,—
Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the great tomb of man. The golden sun,
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,
Are shining on the sad abodes of death,
Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread
The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom.—Take the wings
Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,[1]

---

[1] *Barcan wilderness.* In eastern Africa.

Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound,
Save his own dashings—yet the dead are there:
And millions in those solitudes, since first
The flight of years began, have laid them down
In their last sleep—the dead reign there alone.
So shalt thou rest, and what if thou withdraw
In silence from the living, and no friend
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
Plod on, and each one as before will chase
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave
Their mirth and their employments, and shall come
And make their bed with thee. As the long train
Of ages glides away, the sons of men,
The youth in life's fresh spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years, matron and maid,
The speechless babe, and the gray-headed man—
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,
By those who in their turn shall follow them.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

(1817)

meditative, trust

much more in it

appreciative of serenity

TO A WATERFOWL

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

more depth than the sky

Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

One of finest poems written by American

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly seen against the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean-side?

trust

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet on my heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart:

[illegible]

He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

(1818)

His idea of nature is a restful place [illegible] of deity [illegible]

PROUD MAISIE

SIR WALTER SCOTT

[An imitation of an old ballad-song; sung by the mad woman, Madge Wildfire, in *The Heart of Midlothian*.]

Proud Maisie is in the wood,
  Walking so early;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
  Singing so rarely.

"Tell me, thou bonny bird,
  When shall I marry me?"
"When six braw[1] gentlemen
  Kirkward shall carry ye."

"Who makes the bridal bed,
  Birdie, say truly?"
"The gray-headed sexton
  That delves the grave duly.

"The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
  Shall light thee steady.
The owl from the steeple sing,
  'Welcome, proud lady.' "

(1818)

OZYMANDIAS

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

(1818)

THE AMERICAN FLAG

JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE

When Freedom from her mountain height
  Unfurled her standard to the air,
She tore the azure robe of night,
  And set the stars of glory there.
She mingled with its gorgeous dyes
The milky baldric of the skies,
And striped its pure celestial white
With streakings of the morning light;
Then from his mansion in the sun
She called her eagle bearer down,
And gave into his mighty hand
The symbol of her chosen land.

Majestic monarch of the cloud,
  Who rear'st aloft thy regal form,
To hear the tempest trumpings loud
And see the lightning lances driven,
  When strive the warriors of the storm,
And rolls the thunder-drum of heaven—
Child of the sun! to thee 'tis given
  To guard the banner of the free,
To hover in the sulphur smoke,
To ward away the battle-stroke,
And bid its blendings shine afar,
Like rainbows on the cloud of war,
  The harbingers of victory!

Flag of the brave! thy folds shall fly,
The sign of hope and triumph high,
When speaks the signal-trumpet tone,
And the long line comes gleaming on.
Ere yet the life-blood, warm and wet,
Has dimmed the glistening bayonet,
Each soldier eye shall brightly turn
To where thy sky-born glories burn,
And, as his springing steps advance,
Catch war and vengeance from the glance.
And when the cannon-mouthings loud
Heave in wild wreaths the battle-shroud,
And gory sabres rise and fall
Like shoots of flame on midnight's pall,
  Then shall thy meteor glances glow,
And cowering foes shall shrink beneath
  Each gallant arm that strikes below
That lovely messenger of death.

Flag of the seas! on ocean wave
Thy stars shall glitter o'er the brave;
When death, careering on the gale,
Sweeps darkly round the bellied sail,
And frighted waves rush wildly back
Before the broadside's reeling rack,
Each dying wanderer of the sea
Shall look at once to heaven and thee,
And smile to see thy splendors fly
In triumph o'er his closing eye.

---

[1] *braw.* Brave.

Flag of the free heart's hope and home!
By angel hands to valor given;
Thy stars have lit the welkin dome,
And all thy hues were born in heaven.
Forever float that standard sheet!
Where breathes the foe but falls before us,
With Freedom's soil beneath our feet,
And Freedom's banner streaming o'er us?

(1819)

very subjective moody

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

JOHN KEATS

Power of expression for

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards[1] had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-wingèd Dryad[2] of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

power of expression

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cooled a long age in the deep-delvèd earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song,[3] and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,[4]
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stainèd mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs;
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,[1]
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Clustered around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmèd[2] darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets covered up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, fully of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

---

[1] *Lethe-wards.* Lethe was the river of forgetfulness of which the dead drank on reaching the under-world.
[2] *Dryad.* Forest spirit.
[3] *Provencal song.* Songs of southern France.
[4] *Hippocrene.* A fountain of the Muses.

[1] *pards.* Leopards.
[2] *embalmed.* Balmy.

Part has much sensuousness
takes the fine things than

Sense of human mortality

Darkling[1] I listen; and, for[2] many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Called him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;[3]
The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

(1820)

---

[1] *Darkling.* In the dark.
[2] *for.* Because.
[3] *alien corn.* Foreigners' grain. See Book of *Ruth*, chapter 2.

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

JOHN KEATS

[The subject of this poem is probably not a single definite urn, though Keats may have had particularly in mind an ancient vase which is still preserved at Holland House, London.]

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual[1] ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearièd,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,
For ever panting, and for ever young;

---

[1] *sensual.* Physical.

All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede[1]
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought[2]
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

(1820)

TO AUTUMN

JOHN KEATS

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twinèd flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows,[1] borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;[2]
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;[3]
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

(1820)

---

[1] *brede.* Embroidery.
[2] Entice us from our discontent.

[1] *sallows.* Willows.
[2] *bourn.* Boundary (of a pasture).
[3] *croft.* Plot.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

[Shelley's own note on this poem is as follows: "Conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when the tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapors which pour down the autumnal rains. . . . The phenomenon alluded to at the end of the third stanza is well known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers, and of lakes sympathizes with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is consequently influenced by the winds which announce it." The latter part of the poem expresses Shelley's interpretation of his own personality (see especially line 56), at a time when his radical views had made him a suspected exile, but when he still expected the ultimate triumph of the doctrines of freedom for which he had always contended. The metre is the Italian "terza rima"; notice that the first and third lines of each tercet rime with the middle line of the preceding.]

I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill;

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, Oh hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning; there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad,[1] even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: Oh hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil[2] of his crystàlline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,[3]
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss, and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: Oh hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

---

[1] *Mænad.* A frenzied Bacchic dancer.

[2] *coil.* Murmur.

[3] *Baiæ's bay.* Near Naples; in the vicinity are many ancient ruins.

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

(1820)

THE CLOUD

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,[1]
When the morning star shines dead,
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardors of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;

[1] *rack.* Cloud-mass.

And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,—
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-colored bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when with never a stain
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,[1]
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

(1820)

TO A SKYLARK

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert—
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere
Whose intense lamp narrows[2]
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflow'd.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody:—

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

---

[1] *cenotaph*. Empty tomb.

[2] The waning morning moon.

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden[1]
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the view.

Like a rose embower'd
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-wingèd thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh—thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,[2]
Or triumphal chant,
Matchèd with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt—
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest, but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,[3]
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet, if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

(1820)

A DIRGE

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Rough wind, that moanest loud
Grief too sad for song;
Wild wind, when sullen cloud
Knells all the night long;
Sad storm, whose tears are vain,
Bare woods, whose branches strain,
Deep caves and dreary main,
Wail, for the world's wrong!

(1824)

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[1] *unbeholden.* Gratuitously.
[2] *Hymeneal.* Wedding.
[3] *before and after.* Forward and backward.

A FOREST HYMN

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

The groves were God's first temples. Ere man learned
To hew the shaft, and lay the architrave,[1]
And spread the roof above them—ere he framed
The lofty vault,[2] to gather and roll back
The sound of anthems; in the darkling wood,
Amid the cool and silence, he knelt down,
And offered to the Mightiest solemn thanks
And supplication. For his simple heart
Might not resist the sacred influences
Which, from the stilly twilight of the place,
And from the gray old trunks that high in heaven
Mingled their mossy boughs, and from the sound
Of the invisible breath that swayed at once
All their green tops, stole over him, and bowed
His spirit with the thought of boundless power
And inaccessible majesty. Ah, why
Should we, in the world's riper years, neglect
God's ancient sanctuaries, and adore
Only among the crowd, and under roofs
That our frail hands have raised? Let me, at least,
Here, in the shadow of this aged wood,
Offer one hymn—thrice happy, if it find
Acceptance in his ear.

Father, thy hand
Hath reared these venerable columns, Thou
Didst weave this verdant roof. Thou didst look down
Upon the naked earth, and forthwith rose
All these fair ranks of trees. They, in thy sun,
Budded, and shook their green leaves in thy breeze,
And shot toward heaven. The century-living crow,
Whose birth was in their tops, grew old and died
Among their branches, till, at last, they stood,
As now they stand, massy, and tall, and dark,
Fit shrine for humble worshipper to hold
Communion with his Maker. These dim vaults,
These winding aisles, of human pomp or pride
Report not. No fantastic carvings show
The boast of our vain race to change the form
Of thy fair works. But Thou art here—Thou fill'st
The solitude. Thou art in the soft winds
That run along the summit of these trees
In music; Thou art in the cooler breath
That from the inmost darkness of the place
Comes, scarcely felt; the barky trunks, the ground,
The fresh moist ground, are all instinct[3] with Thee.
Here is continual worship;—Nature, here,
In the tranquillity that Thou dost love,
Enjoys thy presence. Noiselessly, around,
From perch to perch, the solitary bird
Passes; and yon clear spring, that, midst its herbs,
Wells softly forth and wandering steeps the roots
Of half the mighty forest, tells no tale
Of all the good it does. Thou hast not left
Thyself without a witness, in the shades,
Of thy perfections. Grandeur, strength, and grace
Are here to speak of Thee. This mighty oak—
By whose immovable stem I stand and seem
Almost annihilated—not a prince,
In all that proud old world beyond the deep,
E'er wore his crown as loftily as he
Wears the green coronal of leaves with which
Thy hand has graced him. Nestled at his root
Is beauty, such as blooms not in the glare
Of the broad sun. That delicate forest flower,
With scented breath and look so like a smile,
Seems, as it issues from the shapeless mould,
An emanation of the indwelling Life,
A visible token of the upholding Love,
That are the soul of this great universe.

---

[1] *architrave.* The timber that rests on the column.

[2] *vault.* Vaulted ceiling.

[3] *instinct.* Saturated.

there is [illegible]

My heart is awed within me when I think
Of the great miracle that still goes on,
In silence, round me—the perpetual work
Of thy creation, finished, yet renewed
Forever. Written on thy works I read
The lesson of thy own eternity.
Lo! all grow old and die—but see again,
How on the faltering footsteps of decay
Youth presses—ever gay and beautiful youth
In all its beautiful forms. These lofty trees
Wave not less proudly that their ancestors
Moulder beneath them. Oh, there is not lost
One of earth's charms: upon her bosom yet,
After the flight of untold centuries,
The freshness of her far beginning lies
And yet shall lie. Life mocks the idle hate
Of his arch-enemy Death—yea, seats himself
Upon the tyrant's throne—the sepulchre,
And of the triumphs of his ghastly foe
Makes his own nourishment. For he came forth
From thine own bosom, and shall have no end.

There have been holy men who hid themselves
Deep in the woody wilderness, and gave
Their lives to thought and prayer, till they outlived
The generation born with them, nor seemed
Less aged than the hoary trees and rocks
Around them;—and there have been holy men
Who deemed it were not well to pass life thus.
But let me often to these solitudes
Retire, and in thy presence reassure
My feeble virtue. Here its enemies,
The passions, at thy plainer footsteps shrink
And tremble and are still. O God! when Thou
Dost scare the world with tempests, set on fire
The heavens with falling thunderbolts, or fill
With all the waters of the firmament
The swift dark whirlwind that uproots the woods
And drowns the villages; when, at thy call,
Uprises the great deep and throws himself
Upon the continent, and overwhelms
Its cities—who forgets not, at the sight
Of these tremendous tokens of thy power,
His pride, and lays his strifes and follies by?
Oh, from these sterner aspects of thy face
Spare me and mine, nor let us need the wrath
Of the mad unchained elements to teach
Who rules them. Be it ours to meditate,
In these calm shades, thy milder majesty,
And to the beautiful order of thy works
Learn to conform the order of our lives.

(1825)

A HEALTH

EDWARD COATE PINKNEY

I fill this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,—
A woman, of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon;
To whom the better elements
And kindly stars have given
A form so fair, that, like the air,
'Tis less of earth than heaven.

Her every tone is music's own,
Like those of morning birds;
And something more than melody
Dwells ever in her words;
The coinage of her heart are they,
And from her lips each flows
As one may see the burdened bee
Forth issue from the rose.

Affections are as thoughts to her,
The measures of her hours;
Her feelings have the fragrancy,
The freshness of young flowers;
And lovely passions, changing oft,
So fill her, she appears
The image of themselves by turns,—
The idol of past years!

Of her bright face one glance will trace
A picture on the brain;
And of her voice in echoing hearts
A sound must long remain;
But memory, such as mine of her,
So very much endears,
When death is nigh, my latest sigh
Will not be life's, but hers.

I fill this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,—
A woman, of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon.
Her health! and would on earth there stood
Some more of such a frame,
That life might be all poetry,
And weariness a name.

(1825)

THE LANDING OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS IN NEW ENGLAND

FELICIA DOROTHEA HEMANS

The breaking waves dashed high
On a stern and rock-bound coast,
And the woods against a stormy sky
Their giant branches tossed;

And the heavy night hung dark
The hills and waters o'er,
When a band of exiles moored their bark
On the wild New England shore.

Not as the conqueror comes,
They, the true-hearted, came;
Not with the roll of the stirring drums,
And the trumpet that sings of fame;

Not as the flying come,
In silence and in fear;
They shook the depth of the desert gloom
With their hymns of lofty cheer.

Amidst the storm they sang,
And the stars heard, and the sea;
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
To the anthem of the free!

The ocean eagle soared
From his nest by the white wave's foam;
And the rocking pines of the forest roared—
This was their welcome home!

There were men with hoary hair
Amidst that pilgrim band;—
Why had they come to wither there,
Away from their childhood's land?

There was woman's fearless eye,
Lit by her deep love's truth;
There was manhood's brow serenely high,
And the fiery heart of youth.

What sought they thus afar?—
Bright jewels of the mine?
The wealth of seas, the spoils of war?—
They sought a faith's pure shrine!

Ay, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod;
They have left unstained what there they found—
Freedom to worship God.

(1826)

THE SON OF GOD GOES FORTH TO WAR

REGINALD HEBER

The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar:
Who follows in His train?

Who best can drink His cup of woe,
Triumphant over pain,
Who patient bears His cross below,
He follows in His train.

The martyr first, whose eagle eye
Could pierce beyond the grave,
Who saw his Master in the sky,
And called on Him to save:

Like Him, with pardon on his tongue,
In midst of mortal pain,
He prayed for them that did the wrong:
Who follows in His train?

A glorious band, the chosen few
On whom the Spirit came,
Twelve valiant saints, their hope they knew,
And mocked the cross and flame;

They climbed the steep ascent of heaven
Through peril, toil, and pain:
O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train!

(1827)

OLD IRONSIDES

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

[When he was a law student at Cambridge, Holmes's indignation was aroused by a newspaper paragraph announcing that it was proposed to destroy the historic U. S. frigate *Constitution*, now old and valueless. He dashed off these verses, and the interest which they aroused prolonged the life of the warship.]

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!
  Long has it waved on high,
And many an eve has danced to see
  That banner in the sky;
Beneath it rung the battle shout,
  And burst the cannon's roar;—
The meteor of the ocean air
  Shall sweep the clouds no more.

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
  Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,
  And waves were white below,
No more shall feel the victor's tread,
  Or know the conquered knee;
The harpies of the shore shall pluck
  The eagle of the sea!

Oh, better that her shattered hulk
  Should sink beneath the wave!
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
  And there should be her grave;
Nail to the mast her holy flag,
  Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
  The lightning and the gale!

(1830)

THE LAST LEAF

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

I saw him once before,
As he passed by the door,
    And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
    With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
    Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the crier on his round
    Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
    Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
    "They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has pressed
    In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
    On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said—
Poor old lady, she is dead
    Long ago—
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
    In the snow.

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
    Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
    In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
    At him here;
But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that.
    Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
    In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old, forsaken bough
    Where I cling.

(1831)

FOREFATHERS' HYMN

LEONARD BACON

O God, beneath Thy guiding hand
Our exiled fathers crossed the sea;
And when they trod the wintry strand,
With prayer and psalm they worshipped
    Thee.

Thou heard'st, well pleased, the song, the
    prayer:
Thy blessing came; and still its power
Shall onward through the ages bear
The memory of that holy hour.

Laws, freedom, truth, and faith in God
Came with those exiles o'er the waves;
And where their pilgrim feet have trod
The God they trusted guards their graves.

And here Thy Name, O God of love,
Their children's children shall adore,
Till these eternal hills remove,
And spring adorns the earth no more.

(1833)

CONCORD HYMN

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Sung at the completion of the Battle Monument, April 19, 1837

[This monument was erected by the riverside at Concord, Massachusetts, as a memorial of the Battle of Lexington and Concord, April 19, 1775.]

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
And Time the ruined bridge has swept
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set to-day a votive stone,
That memory may their deed redeem,
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare
To die, and leave their children free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them and thee.

(1837)

A PSALM OF LIFE

What the Heart of the Young Man Said to the Psalmist

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

[The opening lines allude to the 90th Psalm, especially verse 5; line 7 to *Genesis* 3:19.]

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!—
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
"Dust thou art, to dust returnest,"
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act,—act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

(1838)

THE HUMBLE-BEE

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Burly, dozing humble-bee,
Where thou art is clime for me.
Let them sail for Porto Rique,
Far-off heats through seas to seek;
I will follow thee alone,
Thou animated torrid-zone!
Zigzag steerer, desert cheerer,
Let me chase thy waving lines;
Keep me nearer, me thy hearer,
Singing over shrubs and vines.

Insect lover of the sun,
Joy of thy dominion!

Sailor of the atmosphere;
Swimmer through the waves of air;
Voyager of light and noon;
Epicurean[1] of June;
Wait, I prithee, till I come
Within earshot of thy hum,—
All without is martyrdom.

When the south wind, in May days,
With a net of shining haze
Silvers the horizon wall,
And with softness touching all,
Tints the human countenance
With a color of romance,
And infusing subtle heats,
Turns the sod to violets,
Thou, in sunny solitudes,
Rover of the underwoods,
The green silence dost displace
With thy mellow, breezy bass.

Hot midsummer's petted crone,
Sweet to me thy drowsy tone
Tells of countless sunny hours,
Long days, and solid banks of flowers;
Of gulfs of sweetness without bound
In Indian wildernesses found;
Of Syrian peace, immortal leisure,
Firmest cheer, and bird-like pleasure.

Aught unsavory or unclean
Hath my insect never seen;
But violets and bilberry bells,
Maple-sap and daffodils,
Grass with green flag half-mast high,
Succory to match the sky,
Columbine with horn of honey,
Scented fern, and agrimony,
Clover, catchfly, adder's-tongue,
And brier-roses, dwelt among;
All beside was unknown waste,
All was picture as he passed.

Wiser far than human seer,
Yellow-breeched philosopher!
Seeing only what is fair,
Sipping only what is sweet,
Thou dost mock at fate and care,
Leave the chaff, and take the wheat.
When the fierce northwestern blast
Cools sea and land so far and fast,
Thou already slumberest deep;
Woe and want thou canst outsleep;
Want and woe, which torture us,
Thy sleep makes ridiculous.

(1839)

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[1] *Epicurean.* Follower of the philosophy of pleasure-seeking.

THE RHODORA

On Being Asked, Whence is the Flower?

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Emerson doesnt believe that everything [illegible] put on ear for man's u

In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,
I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,
Made the black water with their beauty gay;
Here might the red-bird come his plumes to cool,
And court the flower that cheapens his array.
Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew:
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same Power that brought me there brought you.

(1839)

THE SNOW-STORM

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.
Out of an unseen quarry evermore
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
Curves his white bastions with projected roof

Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work
So fanciful, so savage, naught cares he
For number or proportion. Mockingly,
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian[1] wreaths;
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,
Maugre[2] the farmer's sighs; and at the gate
A tapering turret overtops the work.
And when his hours are numbered, and the world
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,
The frolic architecture of the snow.

(1841)

MAIDENHOOD

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Maiden! with the meek brown eyes,
In whose orbs a shadow lies
Like the dusk in evening skies!

Thou whose locks outshine the sun,
Golden tresses, wreathed in one,
As the braided streamlets run!

Standing, with reluctant feet,
Where the brook and river meet,
Womanhood and childhood fleet!

Gazing, with a timid glance,
On the brooklet's swift advance,
On the river's broad expanse!

Deep and still, that gliding stream
Beautiful to thee must seem
As the river of a dream.

Then why pause with indecision,
When bright angels in the vision
Beckon thee to fields Elysian?

Seest thou shadows sailing by,
As the dove, with startled eye,
Sees the falcon's shadow fly?

Hearest thou voices on the shore,
That our ears perceive no more,
Deafened by the cataract's roar?

Oh, thou child of many prayers!
Life hath quicksands,—Life hath snares!
Care and age come unawares!

Like the swell of some sweet tune,
Morning rises into noon,
May glides onward into June.

Childhood is the bough, where slumbered
Birds and blossoms many-numbered;—
Age, that bough with snows encumbered.

Gather, then, each flower that grows,
When the young heart overflows,
To embalm that tent of snows.

Bear a lily in thy hand;
Gates of brass cannot withstand
One touch of that magic wand.

Bear through sorrow, wrong, and ruth,
In thy heart the dew of youth,
On thy lips the smile of truth.

Oh, that dew, like balm, shall steal
Into wounds that cannot heal,
Even as sleep our eyes doth seal;

And that smile, like sunshine, dart
Into many a sunless heart,
For a smile of God thou art.

(1841)

THE YEAR'S AT THE SPRING

ROBERT BROWNING

[From the drama, *Pippa Passes*]

The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!

(1841)

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[1] *Parian.* Of white Parian marble.
[2] *Maugre.* In spite of.

MARCHING ALONG

ROBERT BROWNING

[Browning calls this a "Cavalier Tune," that is, a song supposed to be sung by the Royalists in the Civil Wars of 1642-49. Line 2 refers to the Puritan fashion of wearing the hair short. Pym, Hampden, Hazelrig, and Fiennes were Parliamentary leaders; Prince Rupert, a dashing cavalry leader, was the king's nephew.]

Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King,
Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing:
And, pressing a troop unable to stoop
And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop.
Marched them along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

God for King Charles! Pym and such carles[1]
To the Devil that prompts 'em their treasonous parles![2]
Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup,
Hands from the pasty, nor bite take nor sup
Till you're—
Chorus.—Marching along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

Hampden to hell, and his obsequies' knell.
Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Harry as well!
England, good cheer! Rupert is near!
Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here,
Chorus.—Marching along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song?

Then, God for King Charles! Pym and his snarls
To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent carles!
Hold by the right, you double your might;
So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for the fight,
Chorus.—March we along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song!

(1842)

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[1] *carles.* Fellows.
[2] *parles.* Conspiring.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

ALFRED TENNYSON

perfect [illegible]
poem

[Reminiscent, like *In Memoriam*, of the death of Tennyson's friend, Hallam; see the note on page 308.]

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

of life

O, well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O, well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

(1842)

LOCKSLEY HALL

ALFRED TENNYSON

[This is a dramatic monologue, in no way representing the poet's personality, though it does represent his interest in current questions, such as the new science (see lines 12, 186), the social problem (135-6), etc. Tennyson himself said that "the whole poem represents young life, its good side, its deficiencies, its yearning." For the reader's convenience it is here divided into seven sections—not marked by Tennyson—which represent distinct moments or stages in the thought of the supposed speaker. In 1885 appeared a sequel, called "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After," depicting the same character in his old age; from this it may be inferred that the speaker is about twenty years of age at the time of the present poem. Of special interest in the present era is the remarkable prophecy of the use of aviation in war, found in lines 123-4.]

Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn:
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the west.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fireflies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed;
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed;

When I dipped into the future far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.—

In the spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast;
In the spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest;

In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove;
In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, "My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs—
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, "I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong;"
Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin?" weeping, "I have loved thee long."

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses ring,
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness of the spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine no more!
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren shore!

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy? having known me—to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be; thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is; thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy; think not they are glazed with wine.
Go to him, it is thy duty; kiss him, take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought;
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand—
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth!
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd[1] forehead of the fool!

Well—'tis well that I should bluster!—Hadst thou less unworthy proved—
Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years should come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging rookery[2] home.

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[1] *straiten'd.* Narrow.

[2] *rookery.* Flock of rooks (crows).

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind?

I remember one that perish'd; sweetly did she speak and move;
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore?
No—she never loved me truly; love is love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils! this is truth the poet[1] sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whisper'd by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow; get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender voice will cry.
'Tis a purer life than thine, a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down; my latest rival brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

O. the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his; it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

"They were dangerous guides the feelings—she herself was not exempt—
Truly, she herself had suffer'd"—Perish in thy self-contempt!

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy! wherefore should I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these?
Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets overflow.
I have but an angry fancy; what is that which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,
When the ranks are roll'd in vapor, and the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honor feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

---

[1] *the poet.* Dante.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new;
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do.

For I dipped into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilot of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapped in universal law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint.
Science moves, but slowly, slowly creeping on from point to point;

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn.

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd string?
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's pleasure, woman's pain—
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain.

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat,

Where in wild Mahratta-battle[1] fell my father evil-starr'd;—
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and breathing space;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks.
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or clime?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon![2]

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.[3]

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day;
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age,—for mine I knew not,—help me as when life begun;
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the sun.

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[1] *Mahratta-battle.* The home of the Mahrattas includes a large part of Western and Central India, which had come under British control in Tennyson's generation.

[2] *Joshua's moon.* See *Joshua* 10:13.

[3] Tennyson explained that this line was suggested to him by the new art of railway locomotion, and that at the time he wrote it he supposed that the track-rails were grooved.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall!
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,[1]
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

(1842)

ULYSSES

ALFRED TENNYSON

[The *Odyssey*, the chief ancient poem treating of Ulysses, had ended with the hero's return to Ithaca, his home, after his wanderings; but further wanderings had been foretold for his last years. Tennyson also took a hint from Dante, who represented the spirit of Ulysses as saying, "Neither fondness for my son, nor piety for my old father, nor the due love that should have made Penelope glad, could overcome within me the ardor that I had to gain experience of the world."]

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel; I will drink
Life to the lees. All times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades[2]
Vex'd the dim sea. I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known,—cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honor'd of them all,—
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravel'd world whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains; but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things: and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle,—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail;
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me,—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads,—you and I are old;

---

[1] *holt*. Woodland.

[2] *Hyades*. A constellation whose rising, in the month of May, was associated with the coming of the rainy season.

Old age hath yet his honor and his toil.
Death closes all; but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,[1]
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew,
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are,—
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

(1842)

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[1] *Happy Isles.* The Greek paradise.

SIR GALAHAD

ALFRED TENNYSON

[Sir Galahad, alone of Arthur's knights of the Round Table, was perfectly pure of heart, and so won the vision of the Holy Grail, the cup of the Last Supper. Tennyson represents in him that spirit of mystical devotion, a combination of religion and knightly chivalry, which he later portrayed more fully in the *Idylls of the King.*]

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel;
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,[1]
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favors fall!
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall.[2]
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt[3] and shrine;
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns.
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice, but none are there;
The stalls[4] are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chants resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres[5]
I find a magic bark.
I leap on board; no helmsman steers;
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the Holy Grail;
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping[6] wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
Thro' dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,[7]
And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,

---

[1] *stands.* Halts.
[2] *thrall.* Captivity.
[3] *crypt.* Convent cell.
[4] *stalls.* Seats (in the chancel).
[5] *meres.* Lakes.
[6] *sleeping.* Expanded but motionless.
[7] *leads.* Roofing.

And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden[1] knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odors haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armor that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
"O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near."
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the Holy Grail.

(1842)

THE SONG OF THE SHIRT

THOMAS HOOD

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sits in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the "Song of the Shirt."

"Work! work! work!
While the cock is crowing aloof!
And work—work—work,
Till the stars shine through the roof!
It's oh! to be a slave
Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where woman has never a soul to save,
If this is Christian work!

"Work—work—work
Till the brain begins to swim;
Work—work—work
Till the eyes are heavy and dim.
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream!

"Oh, men, with sisters dear!
Oh, men, with mothers and wives!
It is not linen you're wearing out,
But human creatures' lives!
Stitch—stitch—stitch,
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A Shroud as well as a Shirt.

"But why do I talk of Death?
That phantom of grisly bone,
I hardly fear his terrible shape,
It seems so like my own—
It seems so like my own,
Because of the fasts I keep;
Oh, God! that bread should be so dear,
And flesh and blood so cheap!

"Work—work—work!
My labor never flags;
And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
A crust of bread—and rags.
That shattered roof—this naked floor—
A table—a broken chair—
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there.

"Work—work—work!
From weary chime to chime,
Work—work—work—
As prisoners work for crime!
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Seam, and gusset, and band.
Till the heart is sick, and the brain benumbed
As well as the weary hand.

"Work—work—work,
In the dull December light,
And work—work—work,
When the weather is warm and bright,
While underneath the eaves
The brooding swallows cling
As if to show me their sunny backs
And twit me with the spring.

"Oh! but to breathe the breath
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet,
With the sky above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet;

---

[1] *maiden.* Untried *or* unsullied.

For only one short hour
To feel as I used to feel,
Before I knew the woes of want
And the walk that costs a meal.

"Oh, but for one short hour!
A respite however brief!
No blessed leisure for Love or Hope,
But only time for Grief!
A little weeping would ease my heart,
But in their briny bed
My tears must stop, for every drop
Hinders needle and thread!"

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
(Would that its tone could reach the rich!)
She sang this "Song of the Shirt."

(1843)

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

[This poem was inspired by a report lately made by Richard H. Horne on the employment of children in English mines and factories. Mrs. Browning mentioned this, in particular, as her authority for the superstition referred to in lines 113-116.]

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
And *that* cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,
The young birds are chirping in the nest,
The young fawns are playing with the shadows,
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow,
Why their tears are falling so?
The old man may weep for his to-morrow
Which is lost in Long Ago;
The old tree is leafless in the forest,
The old year is ending in the frost,
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest,
The old hope is hardest to be lost.
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,
In our happy Fatherland?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses
Down the cheeks of infancy.
"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary;
Our young feet," they say, "are very weak!
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—
Our grave-rest is very far to seek.
Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children;
For the outside earth is cold;
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,
And the graves are for the old."

"True," say the children, "it may happen
That we die before our time;
Little Alice died last year—her grave is shapen
Like a snowball, in the rime.[1]
We looked into the pit prepared to take her:
Was no room for any work in the close clay!
From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,
Crying, 'Get up, little Alice! it is day.'
If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries;
Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,
For the smile has time for growing in her eyes:
And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in

---

[1] *rime.* Frost.

The shroud by the kirk-chime!
It is good when it happens," say the children,
"That we die before our time."

Alas, alas, the children! they are seeking
Death in life, as best to have;
They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,
With a cerement from the grave.
Go out, children, from the mine and from the city,—
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do;
Pluck you handfuls of the meadow cowslips pretty,
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through!
But they answer, "Are your cowslips of the meadows
Like our weeds anear the mine?
Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine!

"For oh," say the children, "we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap;
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,
We fall upon our faces, trying to go;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow;
For all day we drag our burden tiring
Through the coal-dark, underground—
Or all day we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

"For all day the wheels are droning, turning—
Their wind comes in our faces—
Till our hearts turn—our heads, with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places:
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling,
Turns the long light that drops adown the wall,
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling,
All are turning, all the day, and we with all.
And all day the iron wheels are droning,
And sometimes we could pray,
'O ye wheels' (breaking out in a mad moaning),
'Stop! be silent for to-day!'"

Aye! be silent! Let them hear each other breathing
For a moment, mouth to mouth!
Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing
Of their tender human youth!
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
Is not all the life God fashions or reveals:
Let them prove their living souls against the notion
That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!—
Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,
Grinding life down from its mark;[1]
And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward,
Spin on blindly in the dark.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,
To look up to Him and pray;
So the blessèd One, who blesseth all the others,
Will bless them another day.
They answer, "Who is God that He should hear us,
While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred?
When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us
Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word.
And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)
Strangers speaking at the door:
Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him,
Hears our weeping any more?

"Two words, indeed, of praying we remember,
And at midnight's hour of harm,
'Our Father,' looking upward in the chamber,
We say softly for a charm.
We know no other words, except 'Our Father,'
And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,
God may pluck them, with the silence sweet to gather,

---

[1] *mark.* Normal quality.

And hold both within His right hand, which is strong.
'Our Father!' If He heard us, He would surely
(For they call Him good and mild)
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
'Come and rest with Me, my child.'

"But, no!" say the children, weeping faster,
"He is speechless as a stone;
And they tell us, of His image is the master
Who commands us to work on.
Go to!" say the children,—"up in Heaven
Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.
Do not mock us; grief has made us unbelieving—
We look up for God, but tears have made us blind."
Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,
O my brothers, what ye preach?
For God's possible is taught by His world's loving,
And the children doubt of each.

And well may the children weep before you!
They are weary ere they run;
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory
Which is brighter than the sun,
They know the grief of man, without its wisdom;
They sink in man's despair, without its calm;
Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,
Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm,—
Are worn, as if with age, yet unretrievingly
The harvest of its memories cannot reap,—
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly.
Let them weep! let them weep!

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in high places,[1]
With eyes turned on Deity!—
"How long," they say, "how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart,—
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,
And your purple shows your path!
But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath."

(1844)

RONDEAU

LEIGH HUNT

Jenny kissed me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets to fill your list, put that in:
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have missed me,
Say I'm growing old, but add,
Jenny kissed me.

(1844)

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[1] See *Matthew* 18:10.

THE PRESENT CRISIS

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

[This poem was written with special reference to the question of the annexation of Texas, but concerns the cause of anti-slavery generally, and indeed that of reform in any age. In the next to the last stanza Lowell refers to the fact that slavery was defended by arguments derived from the beliefs and deeds of our forefathers, who nevertheless were progressives in their day.—The poem is here abbreviated by the omission of four stanzas.]

When a deed is done for Freedom, through the broad earth's aching breast
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic, trembling on from east to west,
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels the soul within him climb
To the awful verge of manhood, as the energy sublime
Of a century bursts full-blossomed on the thorny stem of Time.

[illegible]

For mankind are one in spirit, and an instinct bears along,
Round the earth's electric circle, the swift flash of right or wrong;
Whether conscious or unconscious, yet Humanity's vast frame
Through its ocean-sundered fibres feels the gush of joy or shame;—
In the gain or loss of one race all the rest have equal claim.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the right,
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and that light.

Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose party thou shalt stand,
Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes the dust against our land?
Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 'tis Truth alone is strong,
And, albeit she wander outcast now, I see around her throng
Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield her from all wrong.

Careless seems the great Avenger; history's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,—
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.

We see dimly in the Present what is small and what is great,
Slow of faith how weak an arm may turn the iron helm of fate,
But the soul is still oracular; amid the market's din,
List the ominous stern whisper from the Delphic cave[1] within,—
"They enslave their children's children who make compromise with sin."

Then to side with Truth is noble when we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just;
Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside,
Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified,
And the multitude make virtue of the faith they had denied.

Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes,—they were souls that stood alone,
While the men they agonized for hurled the contumelious stone,
Stood serene, and down the future saw the golden beam incline
To the side of perfect justice, mastered by their faith divine,
By one man's plain truth to manhood and to God's supreme design.

---

[1] *Delphic cave.* The seat of the greatest of oracles.

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By the light of burning heretics Christ's bleeding feet I track,
Toiling up new Calvaries ever with the cross that turns not back,
And these mounts of anguish number how each generation learned
One new word of that grand *Credo*[1] which in prophet-hearts hath burned
Since the first man stood God-conquered with his face to heaven upturned.

For Humanity sweeps onward: where to-day the martyr stands,
On the morrow crouches Judas with the silver in his hands;
Far in front the cross stands ready and the crackling fagots burn,
While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return
To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn.

'Tis as easy to be heroes as to sit the idle slaves
Of a legendary virtue carved upon our father's graves.
Worshippers of light ancestral make the present light a crime;—
Was the Mayflower launched by cowards, steered by men behind their time?
Turn those tracks toward Past or Future, that make Plymouth Rock sublime?

They were men of present valor, stalwart old iconoclasts,
Unconvinced by axe or gibbet that all virtue was the Past's;
But we make their truth our falsehood, thinking that hath made us free,
Hoarding it in mouldy parchments, while our tender spirits flee
The rude grasp of that great Impulse which drove them across the sea.

They have rights who dare maintain them; we are traitors to our sires,
Smothering in their holy ashes Freedom's new-lit altar-fires;
Shall we make their creed our jailer? Shall we, in our haste to slay,
From the tombs of the old prophets steal the funeral lamps away
To light up the martyr-fagots round the prophets of to-day?

New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of Truth;
Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires! we ourselves must Pilgrims be,
Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea,
Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key.

(1844)

---

[1] *Credo.* Creed, faith.

Plea for
"universal"

THE ARSENAL AT SPRINGFIELD

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

very fine stanza

This is the Arsenal. From floor to ceiling,
Like a huge organ, rise the burnished arms;
But from their silent pipes no anthem pealing
Startles the villages with strange alarms.

Ah! what a sound will rise, how wild and dreary,
When the death-angel touches those swift keys!
What loud lament and dismal *miserere*[1]
Will mingle with their awful symphonies!

I hear even now the infinite fierce chorus,
The cries of agony, the endless groan,
Which, through the ages that have gone before us, 11
In long reverberations reach our own.

On helm and harness rings the Saxon hammer,
Through Cimbric forest[2] roars the Norseman's song,
And loud, amid the universal clamor,
O'er distant deserts sounds the Tartar gong.

I hear the Florentine, who from his palace
Wheels out his battle-bell[3] with dreadful din,
And Aztec priests upon their teocallis[4]
Beat the wild war-drums made of serpent's skin; 20

The tumult of each sacked and burning village;
The shout that every prayer for mercy drowns;
The soldiers' revels in the midst of pillage;
The wail of famine in beleaguered towns;

The bursting shell, the gateway wrenched asunder,
The rattling musketry, the clashing blade;
And ever and anon, in tones of thunder,
The diapason of the cannonade.

Is it, O man, with such discordant noises,
With such accursed instruments as these, 30
Thou drownest Nature's sweet and kindly voices,
And jarrest the celestial harmonies?

Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals or forts;

propag

The warrior's name would be a name abhorrèd!
And every nation that should lift again
Its hand against a brother, on its forehead
Would wear for evermore the curse of Cain! 40

Down the dark future, through long generations,
The echoing sounds grow fainter and then cease;
And like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibrations,
I hear once more the voice of Christ say, "Peace!"

Peace! and no longer from its brazen portals
The blast of War's great organ shakes the skies!
But beautiful as songs of the immortals,
The holy melodies of love arise.

music & imagination

(1844)

TO THE DANDELION

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

Dear common flower, that grow'st beside the way,
Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,
First pledge of blithesome May,

---

[1] *miserere.* Prayer for mercy (from the first word of Psalm 51, Latin version).
[2] *Cimbric forest.* In the region of Jutland, an ancient home of the Cimbri.
[3] *battle-bell.* A bell which the Florentines of the 13th century used to take with them, on wheels, to the battle-field.
[4] *teocallis.* Temples (of the Aztecs).

Which children pluck, and, full of pride, uphold,
High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they
An Eldorado[1] in the grass have found,
Which not the rich earth's ample round
May match in wealth, thou art more dear to me
Than all the prouder summer-blooms may be.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow
Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,
Nor wrinkled the lean brow
Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease;
'Tis the Spring's largess, which she scatters now
To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,
Though most hearts never understand
To take it at God's value, but pass by
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy;
To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime;
The eyes thou givest me
Are in the heart, and heed not space or time:
Not in mid June the golden-cuirassed bee
Feels a more summer-like warm ravishment
In the white lily's breezy tent,
His fragrant Sybaris,[2] than I, when first
From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.

Then think I of deep shadows on the grass,
Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,
Where, as the breezes pass,
The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways,
Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,
Or whiten in the wind, of waters blue
That from the distance sparkle through
Some woodland gap, and of a sky above,
Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth move.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are linked with thee;
The sight of thee calls back the robin's song,
Who, from the dark old tree
Beside the door, sang clearly all day long,
And I, secure in childish piety,
Listened as if I heard an angel sing
With news from heaven, which he could bring
Fresh every day to my untainted ears
When birds and flowers and I were happy peers.

How like a prodigal doth Nature seem,
When thou, for all thy gold, so common art!
Thou teachest me to deem
More sacredly of every human heart,
Since each reflects in joy its scanty gleam
Of heaven, and could some wondrous secret show,
Did we but pay the love we owe,
And with a child's undoubting wisdom look
On all these living pages of God's book.

(1845)

THE OLD CLOCK ON THE STAIRS

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Somewhat back from the village street
Stands the old-fashioned country-seat.
Across its antique portico
Tall poplar-trees their shadows throw;
And from its station in the hall
An ancient timepiece says to all,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

Half-way up the stairs it stands,
And points and beckons with its hands
From its case of massive oak,
Like a monk, who, under his cloak,
Crosses himself, and sighs, alas!
With sorrowful voice to all who pass,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

By day its voice is low and light;
But in the silent dead of night,
Distinct as a passing footstep's fall,
It echoes along the vacant hall,

---

[1] *Eldorado.* Gold country.
[2] *Sybaris.* A city famous for luxury.

Along the ceiling, along the floor,
And seems to say, at each chamber-door,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

Through days of sorrow and of mirth,
Through days of death and days of birth,
Through every swift vicissitude
Of changeful time, unchanged it has stood,
And as if, like God, it all things saw,
It calmly repeats those words of awe,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

In that mansion used to be
Free-hearted Hospitality;
His great fires up the chimney roared;
The stranger feasted at his board;
But, like the skeleton at the feast,
That warning timepiece never ceased,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

There groups of merry children played,
There youths and maidens dreaming strayed;
O precious hours! O golden prime,
And affluence of love and time!
Even as a miser counts his gold,
Those hours the ancient timepiece told,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

From that chamber, clothed in white,
The bride came forth on her wedding night;
There, in that silent room below,
The dead lay in his shroud of snow;
And in the hush that followed the prayer
Was heard the old clock on the stair,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

All are scattered now and fled,
Some are married, some are dead;
And when I ask, with throbs of pain,
"Ah! when shall they all meet again?"
As in the days long since gone by,
The ancient timepiece makes reply,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

Never here, forever there,
Where all parting, pain, and care,
And death, and time shall disappear,—
Forever there, but never here!
The horologe[1] of Eternity
Sayeth this incessantly,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

(1845)

HOME-THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

ROBERT BROWNING

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

(1845)

HOME-THOUGHTS FROM THE SEA

ROBERT BROWNING

[Actually written on board a vessel off the African coast.]

Nobly, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the Northwest died away;
Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz Bay;

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[1] *horologe.* Time-piece.

Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar lay;
In the dimmest Northeast distance dawned Gibraltar grand and gray;
"Here and here did England help me: how can I help England?"—say,
Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise and pray,
While Jove's planet[1] rises yonder, silent over Africa.

(1845)

SHAKESPEARE

MATTHEW ARNOLD

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask.—Thou smilest, and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill
That to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares[2] but the cloudy border of his base
To the foil'd searching of mortality;
And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-schooled, self-scanned, self-honored, self-secure,
Didst walk on earth unguess'd at.—Better so!
All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs that bow,
Find their sole voice in that victorious brow.

(1849)

ANNABEL LEE

EDGAR ALLAN POE

It was many and many a year ago,
  In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
  By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
  Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
  In this kingdom by the sea,
But we loved with a love that was more than love,
  I and my Annabel Lee;
With a love that the wingèd seraphs of heaven
  Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
  In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
  My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsmen came
  And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
  In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
  Went envying her and me;
Yes, that was the reason (as all men know,
  In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
  Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
  Of those who were older than we,
  Of many far wiser than we;
And neither the angels in heaven above,
  Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
  Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
  Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
  Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
  In her sepulchre there by the sea,
  In her tomb by the sounding sea.

(1849)

THE FAIRIES

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

Up the airy mountain,
  Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
  For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
  Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
  And white owl's feather!

---

[1] *Jove's planet.* Jupiter.
[2] *Spares.* Allows, shows.

Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home,—
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow tide-foam;
Some in the reeds
Of the black mountain-lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
All night awake.

High on the hill-top
The old King sits;
He is now so old and gray
He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
Columbkill he crosses,
On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses;[1]
Or going up with music
On cold starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.

They stole little Bridget
For seven years long;
When she came down again
Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
Between the night and morrow;
They thought that she was fast asleep,
But she was dead with sorrow.
They have kept here ever since
Deep within the lakes,
On a bed of flag-leaves,
Watching till she wakes.

By the craggy hill-side,
Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
For pleasure here and there.
Is any man so daring
As dig one up in spite,
He shall find their sharpest thorns
In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!

(1850)

SONG

THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES

Old Adam, the carrion crow,
The old crow of Cairo,
He sat in the shower, and let it flow
Under his tail and over his crest,
And through every feather
Leaked the wet weather;
And the bough swung under his nest;
For his beak it was heavy with marrow.
Is that the wind dying? O no;
It's only two devils, that blow
Through a murderer's bones, to and fro,
In the ghosts' moonshine.

Ho! Eve, my gray carrion wife,
When we have supped on kings' marrow,
Where shall we drink and make merry our life?
Our nest it is Queen Cleopatra's skull,
'Tis cloven and cracked,
And battered and hacked,
But with tears of blue eyes it is full;
Let us drink, then, my raven of Cairo.
Is that the wind dying? O no;
It's only two devils, that blow
Through a murderer's bones, to and fro,
In the ghosts' moonshine.

(1850)

SWEET AND LOW

ALFRED TENNYSON

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me:
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon;
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

(1850)

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[1] On opposite sides of Donegal Bay, northern Ireland; these are Irish fairies.

THE SPLENDOR FALLS

ALFRED TENNYSON

["This song," said Tennyson, "was written after hearing the echoes at Killarney in 1848. When I was there I heard a bugle blown beneath the 'Eagle's Nest,' and eight distinct echoes."]

The splendor falls on castle walls
  And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
  And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O, hark, O, hear! how thin and clear,
  And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O, sweet and far from cliff and scar
  The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
  They faint on hill or field or river;
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
  And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

(1850)

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

ALFRED TENNYSON

[The full title would be "In Memory of Arthur Henry Hallam," Tennyson's college friend and betrothed brother-in-law, who died in 1833. The whole work consists of 131 lyrics, with prologue and epilogue, embodying not merely the expression of the poet's love and grief for his friend, but of the whole problem of the significance of human life, sorrow, and death. The first of the following selections consists of the opening stanzas of the prologue, dealing with the contrast between knowledge and faith—a favorite theme of Tennyson's. The second is a complete lyric on the same theme. The third is the famous lyric for New Year's Eve, expressing the poet's hope for the future of the race. The fourth is a notable example of Tennyson's interest in the new science; in it he interprets spiritually the teachings of geology and biology respecting the development of the earth and of man.]

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
  Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
  By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs[1] of light and shade;
  Thou madest Life in man and brute;
  Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust;
  Thou madest man, he knows not why,
  He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
  The highest, holiest manhood thou:
  Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
  They have their day and cease to be:
  They are but broken lights[2] of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know;
  For knowledge is of things we see;
  And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

LIV

O, yet we trust that somehow good
  Will be the final goal of ill,
  To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
  That not one life shall be destroy'd,
  Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
  That not a moth with vain desire
  Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
  I can but trust that good shall fall
  At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream; but what am I?
  An infant crying in the night;
  An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry.

---

[1] *orbs*. The halves of the earth lying in sunlight and shadow.

[2] *broken lights*. The partial prismatic rays, as compared with the full white ones.

CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor;
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CXVIII

Contemplate all this work of Time,
The giant laboring in his youth;
Nor dream of human love and truth
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead
Are breathers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends. They say
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random forms,
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,
The herald of a higher race,
And of himself in higher place,
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;[1]
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
Like glories, move his course,[2] and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipp'd in baths of hissing tears,
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
The reeling faun,[3] the sensual feast;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

(1850)

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

ALFRED TENNYSON

[Tennyson published this poem on the day of the funeral of the "Iron Duke," November 18, 1852. It will be noticed that the ode follows the course of the funeral procession from the moment of its starting from Somerset House to that of the burial in St. Paul's Cathedral. At the opening of the 6th strophe, Lord Nelson, already buried in St. Paul's, is supposed to speak as the procession enters the building, and to be answered by the poet, with a recapitulation of Wellington's military glories. Lines 160-169 are a characteristic expression of Tennyson's political views—distrustful of both "crowns" and "crowds."]

I

Bury the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation;
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation;
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

---

[1] If he develop, as the physical creation has, always in the direction of something higher.

[2] Or if he make of his sufferings a crown of glory, still advancing.

[3] *faun.* A creature half bestial, half human,—here standing for man in a low state of moral development.

II

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?
Here, in streaming London's central roar,
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

III

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long, long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the past.
No more in soldier fashion will he greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute!
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fallen at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew!
Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's[1] victor will be seen no more.

V

All is over and done:
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be toll'd.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mould.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest for ever
Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be toll'd,
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds:
Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,
Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be toll'd,
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd;
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd
Thro' the dome of the golden cross;
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom:
When he with those deep voices wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from shame;
With those deep voices our dead captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great name
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attemper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-echoing avenues of song!

VI

"Who is he that cometh, like an honor'd guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest?"—
Mighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
His foes were thine; he kept us free;
O, give him welcome, this is he

---

[1] *World-victor's.* Napoleon's.

Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun;
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye[1]
Clash'd with his fiery few and won;
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon[2] drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labor'd rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamor of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud Sabbath[3] shook the spoiler down;
A day of onsets of despair!
Dash'd on every rocky square,
Their surging charges foam'd themselves away;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
Thro' the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and overthrew.
So great a soldier taught us there
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!
Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name.

VII

A people's voice! we are a people yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget,
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless powers,
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set
His Briton in blown seas and storming showers,
We have a voice with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control!
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings!
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.
But wink no more in slothful overtrust.
Remember him who led your hosts;
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
For ever; and whatever tempests lower
For ever silent; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all

---

[1] *Assaye.* A battle in India, September, 1803, when Wellington routed a native army of 40,000 with 7,000 men.

[2] In the fall of 1810 Wellington retired to Lisbon, which was protected by three lines of fortifications, and thence gradually pushed out against the French until Napoleon's capitulation of 1814.

[3] *Sabbath.* June 18, 1815, the day of the Battle of Waterloo.

He spoke among you, and the man who spoke;
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power;
Who let the turbid streams of rumor flow
Thro' either babbling world of high and low;
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right.
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named;
Truth-lover was our English Duke;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

VIII

Lo! the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honor shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story
The path of duty was the way to glory.
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which out-redden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story
The path of duty was the way to glory.
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
Such was he: his work is done.
But while the races of mankind endure
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure;
Till in all lands and thro' all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory.
And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame
For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name.

IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmoulded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see.
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung.
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one[1] upon whose hand and heart and brain
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain!
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere;
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane:
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will,
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul?
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.

---

[1] *one.* The Queen.

Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears;
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears;
The black earth yawns; the mortal disappears;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
He is gone who seem'd so great.—
Gone, but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in state,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him;
God accept him, Christ receive him!

(1852)

SELF-DEPENDENCE

MATTHEW ARNOLD

Weary of myself, and sick of asking
What I am, and what I ought to be,
At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me
Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.

And a look of passionate desire
O'er the sea and to the stars I send:
"Ye who from my childhood up have calm'd me,
Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!

"Ah, once more," I cried, "ye stars, ye waters,
On my heart your mighty charm renew;
Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,
Feel my soul becoming vast like you!"

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,
Over the lit sea's unquiet way,
In the rustling night-air came the answer:
"Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as they.

"Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things without them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

"And with joy the stars perform their shining,
And the sea its long moon-silver'd roll;
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul.

"Bounded by themselves, and unregardful
In what state God's other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
These attain the mighty life you see."

O air-born voice! long since, severely clear,
A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear:
"Resolve to be thyself; and know that he
Who finds himself loses his misery!"

(1852)

ODE TO THE NORTH-EAST WIND

CHARLES KINGSLEY

Welcome, wild North-easter!
  Shame it is to see
Odes to every zephyr;
  Ne'er a verse to thee.
Welcome, black North-easter!
  O'er the German foam;
O'er the Danish moorlands,
  From thy frozen home.
Tired we are of summer,
  Tired of gaudy glare,
Showers soft and steaming,
  Hot and breathless air.
Tired of listless dreaming,
  Through the lazy day:
Jovial wind of winter
  Turn us out to play!
Sweep the golden reed-beds;
  Crisp the lazy dyke;
Hunger into madness
  Every plunging pike.
Fill the lake with wild-fowl;
  Fill the marsh with snipe;
While on dreary moorlands
  Lonely curlews pipe.
Through the black fir-forest
  Thunder harsh and dry,
Shattering down the snow-flakes
  Off the curdled sky.

Hark! the brave North-easter!
Breast-high lies the scent,
On by holt[1] and headland, ,
Over heath and bent.[2]
Chime, ye dappled darlings,
Through the sleet and snow.
Who can over-ride you?
Let the horses go!
Chime, ye dappled darlings,
Down the roaring blast;
You shall see a fox die
Ere an hour be past.
Go! and rest to-morrow,
Hunting in your dreams,
While our skates are ringing
O'er the frozen streams.
Let the luscious South-wind
Breathe in lovers' sighs,
While the lazy gallants
Bask in ladies' eyes.
What does he but soften
Heart alike and pen?
'Tis the hard gray weather
Breeds hard English men.
What's the soft South-wester?
'Tis the ladies' breeze,
Bringing home their true-loves
Out of all the seas:
But the black North-easter,
Through the snowstorm hurled,
Drives our English hearts of oak
Seaward round the world.
Come, as came our fathers,
Heralded by thee,
Conquering from the eastward,
Lords by land and sea.
Come; and strong within us
Stir the Vikings' blood;
Bracing brain and sinew;
Blow, thou wind of God!
(1854)

COME INTO THE GARDEN, MAUD

ALFRED TENNYSON

[This famous love-lyric represents a single scene in the long poem called *Maud.* The speaker is Maud's plighted lover, but is not received at the manor-house where she lives; on the night of a great ball given there by her brother he must wait outside while she dances with the young lord (line 29) who is wooing her, but when the ball is over she has promised to join him in the garden.]

Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the rose is blown.

For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves
To faint in his light, and to die.

All night have the roses heard
The flute, violin, bassoon;
All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd
To the dancers dancing in tune;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
And a hush with the setting moon.

I said to the lily, "There is but one,
With whom she has heart to be gay.
When will the dancers leave her alone?
She is weary of dance and play."
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
And half to the rising day;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone
The last wheel echoes away.

I said to the rose, "The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine," so I sware to the rose,
"For ever and ever, mine."

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
As the music clash'd in the Hall;
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
And the valleys of Paradise.

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree;
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;

---

[1] *holt.* Woodland.

[2] *bent.* Hillside.

But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate,
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate.
The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near;"
And the white rose weeps, "She is late;"
The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear;"
And the lily whispers, "I wait."

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead,—
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

(1855)

EVELYN HOPE

ROBERT BROWNING

Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead!
Sit and watch by her side an hour.
That is her book-shelf, this her bed;
She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,
Beginning to die too, in the glass;
Little has yet been changed, I think:
The shutters are shut, no light may pass
Save two long rays through the hinge's chink.

Sixteen years old when she died!
Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name;
It was not her time to love; beside,
Her life had many a hope and aim,
Duties enough and little cares,
And now was quiet, now astir,
Till God's hand beckoned unawares,—
And the sweet white brow is all of her.

Is it too late then, Evelyn Hope?
What, your soul was pure and true,
The good stars met in your horoscope,
Made you of spirit, fire, and dew—
And, just because I was thrice as old
And our paths in the world diverged so wide,
Each was naught to each, must I be told?
We were fellow mortals, naught beside?

No, indeed! for God above
Is great to grant, as mighty to make,
And creates the love to reward the love:
I claim you still, for my own love's sake!
Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few:
Much is to learn, much to forget
Ere the time be come for taking you.

But the time will come,—at last it will,
When, "Evelyn Hope, what meant" (I shall say)
In the lower earth, in the years long still,
That body and soul so pure and gay?
Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,
And your mouth of your own geranium's red—
And what you would do with me, in fine,[1]
In the new life come[2] in the old one's stead.

"I have lived" (I shall say) "so much since then,
Given up myself so many times,
Gained me the gains of various men,
Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes;
Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full scope,
Either I missed or itself missed me:
And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!
What is the issue? let us see!"

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while!
My heart seemed full as it could hold;[3]
There was place and to spare for the frank young smile,

---

[1] *in fine.* Finally.
[2] *come.* Which has come.
[3] (For the grammatical meaning, omit the exclamation point at the end of the preceding line.)

And the red young mouth, and the hair's young gold.
So, hush,—I will give you this leaf to keep:
See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand!
There, that is our secret: go to sleep!
You will wake, and remember, and understand.

(1855)

THE PATRIOT

An Old Story

ROBERT BROWNING

[This monologue does not refer to any one historic person or situation, but to a typical imaginary occurrence such as has often made the heroes of one day the martyrs of the next.]

It was roses, roses, all the way,
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad:
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,
A year ago on this very day.

The air broke into a mist with bells,
The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries.
Had I said, "Good folk, mere noise repels—
But give me your sun from yonder skies!"
They had answered, "And afterward, what else?"

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun
To give it my loving friends to keep!
Naught man could do, have I left undone:
And you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, now a year is run.

There's nobody on the house-tops now—
Just a palsied few at the windows set;
For the best of the sight is, all allow,
At the Shambles' Gate—or, better yet,
By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,
A rope cuts both my wrists behind;
And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,
For they fling, whoever has a mind,
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

Thus I entered, and thus I go!
In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.
"Paid by the world, what dost thou owe
Me?"—God might question;[1] now instead,
'T is God shall repay: I am safer so.

(1855)

"DE GUSTIBUS—"

ROBERT BROWNING

[The title means "Concerning Tastes," the opening words of a Latin proverb meaning "It is useless to argue matters of taste." This is one of a number of poems expressing Browning's devotion to his adopted land of Italy. In lines 31-34 he refers to the hatred of the Italians for their Bourbon king, who reigned in Naples until 1861. Lines 36-40 allude to the story that Queen Mary of England, shortly after the French had taken Calais, said that if her breast were opened after death the word "Calais" would be found engraved on her heart.]

Your ghost will walk, you lover of trees,
(If our loves remain)
In an English lane,
By a cornfield-side a-flutter with poppies.
Hark, those two in the hazel coppice—
A boy and a girl, if the good fates please,
Making love, say,—
The happier they!
Draw yourself up from the light of the moon,
And let them pass, as they will too soon.
With the beanflowers' boon,
And the blackbird's tune,
And May, and June!

What I love best in all the world
Is a castle, precipice-encurled,
In a gash of the wind-grieved Apennine.
Or look for me, old fellow of mine,
(If I get my head from out the mouth
O' the grave, and loose my spirit's bands,
And come again to the land of lands)—
In a sea-side house to the farther South,
Where the baked cicala[2] dies of drouth,
And one sharp tree—'tis a cypress—stands
By the many hundred years red-rusted,
Rough iron-spiked, ripe fruit-o'ercrusted,
My sentinel to guard the sands
To the water's edge. For, what expands
Before the house, but the great opaque
Blue breadth of sea without a break?

---

[1] *might question.* That is, if I were to enter his presence from a triumph.

[2] *cicala.* Cicada, locust.

While, in the house, forever crumbles
Some fragment of the frescoed walls,
From blisters where a scorpion sprawls.
A girl bare-footed brings, and tumbles
Down on the pavement, green-flesh melons,
And says there's news to-day—the king
Was shot at, touched in the liver-wing,
Goes with his Bourbon arm in a sling,
—She hopes they have not caught the felons.
Italy, my Italy!
Queen Mary's saying serves for me—
(When fortune's malice
Lost her Calais)
Open my heart and you will see
Graved inside of it, "Italy."
Such lovers old are I and she:
So it always was, so shall ever be!

(1855)

UP AT A VILLA—DOWN IN THE CITY

(*As Distinguished by an Italian Person of Quality*)

ROBERT BROWNING

Had I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare,
The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city-square;
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window there!

Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear, at least!
There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast;
While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no more than a beast.

Well now, look at our villa! stuck like the horn of a bull
Just on a mountain-edge as bare as the creature's skull,
Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull!
—I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the hair's turned wool.

But the city, oh the city—the square with the houses! Why?
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there's something to take the eye!
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry;
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who hurries by;
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the sun gets high;
And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted properly.

What of a villa? Though winter be over in March by rights,
'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered well off the heights:
You've the brown ploughed land before, where the oxen steam and wheeze,
And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint gray olive-trees.

Is it better in May, I ask you? You've summer all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April suns.
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce risen three fingers well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its great red bell
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children to pick and sell.

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a fountain to spout and splash!
In the shade it sings and springs; in the shine such foambows flash
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that prance and paddle and pash
Round the lady atop in her conch—fifty gazers do not abash,
Though all that she wears is some weeds round her waist in a sort of sash.

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see though you linger.
Except yon cypress that points like death's lean lifted forefinger.
Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix i' the corn and mingle,
Or thrid[1] the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem a-tingle.
Late August or early September, the stunning cicala[2] is shrill,
And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the resinous firs on the hill.
Enough of the seasons,—I spare you the months of the fever and chill.

---

[1] *thrid.* Thread, fly among.
[2] *cicala.* Locust.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed church-bells begin:
No sooner the bells leave off than the diligence rattles in:
You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never a pin.
By and by there's the travelling doctor gives pills, lets blood, draws teeth;
Or the Pulcinello-trumpet[1] breaks up the market beneath.
At the post-office such a scene-picture—the new play, piping hot!
And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves were shot.
Above it, behold the Archbishop's most fatherly of rebukes,
And beneath, with his crown and his lion, some little new law of the Duke's!
Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the Reverend Don So-and-so,
Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, Saint Jerome, and Cicero,
"And moreover" (the sonnet goes rhyming), "the skirts of Saint Paul has reached,
Having preached us those six Lent-lectures more unctuous than ever he preached."
Noon strikes,—here sweeps the procession! our Lady[2] borne smiling and smart
With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven swords stuck in her heart!
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife;
No keeping one's haunches still: it's the greatest pleasure in life.

But bless you, it's dear—it's dear! fowls, wine, at double the rate.
They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and what oil pays passing the gate[3]
It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa for me, not the city!
Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still—ah, the pity, the pity!
Look, two and two go the priests, then the monks with cowls and sandals,
And the penitents dressed in white shirts, a-holding the yellow candles;
One, he carries a flag up straight, and another a cross with handles,
And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for the better prevention of scandals:
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife.
Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such pleasure in life!

(1855)

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

ROBERT BROWNING

Where the quiet-colored end of evening smiles
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward through the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop—
Was the site once, of a city great and gay,
(So they say)
Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

Now,—the country does not even boast a tree,
As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills[1]
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to (else they run
Into one),
Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
Up like fires
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed,
Twelve abreast.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
Never was!

---

[1] *Pulcinello-trumpet.* The trumpet of a Punch and Judy show.

[2] *our Lady.* An image of the Virgin. The "seven swords" symbolized what Catholic theologians called "the seven sorrows" of Mary.

[3] *passing the gate.* Where the *octroi*, or city import tax, was paid.

[1] After "verdure" supply "which," as object of "intersect." In like manner supply "which" after "marble" in line 23.

Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
Stock or stone—
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame;
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
Bought and sold.

Now,—the single little turret that remains
On the plains,
By the caper[1] overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored,
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Through the chinks—
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
Viewed the games.

And I know, while thus the quiet-colored eve
Smiles to leave
To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece
In such peace,
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished gray
Melt away—
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
Waits me there
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
For the goal,
When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless, dumb
Till I come.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades'
Colonnades,
All the causeys,[2] bridges, aqueducts,—and then,
All the men!
When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
Each on each.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
South and North,
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
As the sky,
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—
Gold, of course.
Oh heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns!
Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!
Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!
Love is best.

(1855)

AMERICA

SYDNEY DOBELL

[This is one of several sonnets written at the time of the Crimean War, when the relations between Great Britain and America were somewhat strained.]

Nor force nor fraud shall sunder us! O ye
Who north or south, on east or western land,
Native to noble sounds, say truth for truth,
Freedom for freedom, love for love, and God
For God; O ye who in eternal youth
Speak with a living and creative flood
This universal English, and do stand
Its breathing book; live worthy of that grand,
Heroic utterance—parted, yet a whole,

---

[1] *caper.* A shrub.

[2] *causeys.* Causeways.

Far, yet unsevered,—children brave and free
Of the great Mother-tongue, and ye shall be
Lords of an empire wide as Shakespeare's soul,
Sublime as Milton's immemorial theme,
And rich as Chaucer's speech, and fair as Spenser's dream.

(1855)

THERE WAS A CHILD WENT FORTH

WALT WHITMAN

There was a child went forth every day;
And the first object he look'd upon, that object he became,
And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day,
Or for many years, or stretching cycles of years.

The early lilacs became part of this child,
And grass, and white and red morning-glories, and white and red clover, and the song of the phœbe-bird,
And the Third-month lambs, and the sow's pink-faint litter, and the mare's foal, and the cow's calf,
And the noisy brood of the barnyard or by the mire of the pond-side,
And the fish suspending themselves so curiously below there, and the beautiful curious liquid,
And the water-plants with their graceful flat heads,—all became part of him.

The field-sprouts of Fourth-month and Fifth-month became part of him,
Winter-grain sprouts, and those of the light-yellow corn, and the esculent roots of the garden,
And the apple-trees cover'd with blossoms and the fruit afterward, and wood-berries, and the commonest weeds by the road;
And the old drunkard staggering home from the outhouse of the tavern whence he had lately risen,
And the schoolmistress that pass'd on her way to the school,
And the friendly boys that pass'd, and the quarrelsome boys,
And the tidy and fresh-cheek'd girls, and the barefoot negro boy and girl,
And all the changes of city and country wherever he went.
His own parents,
He that had father'd him and she that had conceiv'd him in her womb and birth'd him,
They gave this child more of themselves than that;
They gave him afterward every day, they became part of him.

The mother at home, quietly placing the dishes on the supper-table,
The mother with mild words, clean her cap and gown, a wholesome odor falling off her person and clothes as she walks by,
The father, strong, self-sufficient, manly, mean, anger'd, unjust,
The blow, the quick loud word, the tight bargain, the crafty lure,
The family usages, the language, the company, the furniture, the yearning and swelling heart,
Affection that will not be gainsay'd, the sense of what is real, the thought if after all it should prove unreal,
The doubts of day-time and the doubts of night-time, the curious whether and how,
Whether that which appears so is so, or is it all flashes and specks?
Men and women crowding fast in the streets, if they are not flashes and specks what are they?

The streets themselves, and the façades of houses, and goods in the windows,
Vehicles, teams, the heavy-plank'd wharves, the huge crossing at the ferries,
The village on the highland, seen from afar at sunset, the river between,
Shadows, aureola and mist, the light falling on roofs and gables of white or brown, three miles off,
The schooner near by, sleepily dropping down the tide, the little boat slack-tow'd astern,
The hurrying tumbling waves, quick-broken crests, slapping,
The strata of color'd clouds, the long bar of maroon-tint away solitary by itself, the spread of purity it lies motionless in,
The horizon's edge, the flying sea-crow, the fragrance of salt marsh and shore mud;
These became part of that child who went forth every day, and who now goes, and will always go forth every day.

(1855)

ing out fact that Poet free to express himself

THE GRASS

[From the poem "Walt Whitman"]

reflective poem

WALT WHITMAN

A child said, *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with full hands;
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is, any more than he.

I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
A scented gift and remembrancer, designedly dropp'd,
Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and remark, and say *Whose?*
Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced babe of the vegetation.

Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic,
And it means,
Sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow zones,
Growing among black folks as among white,
Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I give them the same, I receive them the same.

And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves.

Tenderly will I use you, curling grass;
It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men,
It may be if I had known them I would have loved them,
It may be you are from old people, and from women, and from offspring taken soon out of their mothers' laps,
And here you are the mothers' laps.

This grass is very dark to be from the white heads of old mothers,
Darker than the colorless beards of old men,
Dark to come from under the faint red roofs of mouths.

concrete to give [illegible]

O I perceive after all so many uttering tongues!
And I perceive they do not come from the roofs of mouths for nothing.

I wish I could translate the hints about the dead young men and women,
And the hints about old men and mothers, and the offspring taken soon out of their laps.

What do you think has become of the young and old men?
And what do you think has become of the women and children?

They are alive and well somewhere;
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death;
And if ever there was, it led forward life, and does not wait at the end to arrest it,
And ceased the moment life appear'd.

All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses,
And to die is different from what any one supposed, and luckier.

(1855)

MY LOST YOUTH

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

[The poem refers to Portland, Maine, Longfellow's native town. "Deering's Woods" (lines 47, 82) was an oak-grove on the outskirts of the city; the sea-fight of line 37 was an engagement of the War of 1812, between the American brig *Enterprise* and the British *Boxer*.]

Often I think of the beautiful town
That is seated by the sea;
Often in thought go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
And my youth comes back to me.
And a verse of a Lapland song
Is haunting my memory still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
And catch, in sudden gleams,
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides[1]
Of all my boyish dreams.
And the burden of that old song,
It murmurs and whispers still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the black wharves and the slips,
And the sea-tides tossing free;
And the Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.
And the voice of that wayward song
Is singing and saying still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
And the fort upon the hill;
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,
And the bugle wild and shrill.
And the music of that old song
Throbs in my memory still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the sea-fight far away,
How it thundered o'er the tide!
And the dead captains, as they lay
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay
Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves

---

[1] *Hesperides.* The western isles of the golden apples, in Greek mythology.

In quiet neighborhoods.
And the verse of that sweet old song,
It flutters and murmurs still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the school-boy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.
And the voice of that fitful song
Sings on, and is never still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

There are things of which I may not speak;
There are dreams that cannot die;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
And a mist before the eye.
And the words of that fatal song
Come over me like a chill:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,
As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were,
I find my lost youth again.
And the strange and beautiful song,
The groves are repeating it still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

(1855)

ROBERT OF LINCOLN

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

Merrily swinging on brier and weed,
Near to the nest of his little dame,
Over the mountain-side or mead,
Robert of Lincoln is telling his name:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Snug and safe is that nest of ours,
Hidden among the summer flowers.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln is gayly dress'd,
Wearing a bright black wedding-coat;
White are his shoulders and white his crest.
Hear him call in his merry note:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Look, what a nice new coat is mine,
Sure there was never a bird so fine.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln's Quaker wife,
Pretty and quiet, with plain brown wings,
Passing at home a patient life,
Broods in the grass while her husband sings:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Brood, kind creature; you need not fear
Thieves and robbers while I am here.
Chee, chee, chee.

Modest and shy as a nun is she;
One weak chirp is her only note.
Braggart and prince of braggarts is he,
Pouring boasts from his little throat:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Never was I afraid of man;
Catch me, cowardly knaves, if you can!
Chee, chee, chee.

Six white eggs on a bed of hay,
Flecked with purple, a pretty sight!
There as the mother sits all day,
Robert is singing with all his might:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Nice good wife, that never goes out,
Keeping house while I frolic about.
Chee, chee, chee.

Soon as the little ones chip the shell,
  Six wide mouths are open for food;
Robert of Lincoln bestirs him well,
  Gathering seeds for the hungry brood.
    Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
    Spink, spank, spink;
This new life is likely to be
Hard for a gay young fellow like me.
      Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln at length is made
  Sober with work, and silent with care;
Off is his holiday garment laid,
  Half forgotten that merry air:
    Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
    Spink, spank, spink;
Nobody knows but my mate and I
Where our nest and our nestlings lie.
      Chee, chee, chee.

Summer wanes; the children are grown;
  Fun and frolic no more he knows;
Robert of Lincoln's a humdrum crone;
  Off he flies, and we sing as he goes:
    Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
    Spink, spank, spink;
When you can pipe that merry old strain,
Robert of Lincoln, come back again.
      Chee, chee, chee.

(1855)

THE BAREFOOT BOY

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

Blessings on thee, little man,
Barefoot boy, with cheeks of tan!
With thy turned-up pantaloons,
And thy merry whistled tunes;
With thy red lip, redder still
Kissed by strawberries on the hill;
With the sunshine on thy face,
Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace;
From my heart I give thee joy,—
I was once a barefoot boy!
Prince thou art,—the grown-up man
Only is republican.
Let the million-dollared ride!
Barefoot, trudging at his side,
Thou hast more than he can buy
In the reach of ear and eye,—
Outward sunshine, inward joy:
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy!

Oh for boyhood's painless play,
Sleep that wakes in laughing day,
Health that mocks the doctor's rules,
Knowledge never learned of schools,
Of the wild bee's morning chase,
Of the wild-flower's time and place,
Flight of fowl and habitude
Of the tenants of the wood;
How the tortoise bears his shell,
How the woodchuck digs his cell,
And the ground-mole sinks his well;
How the robin feeds her young,
How the oriole's nest is hung;
Where the whitest lilies blow,
Where the freshest berries grow,
Where the ground-nut trails its vine,
Where the wood-grape's clusters shine;
Of the black wasp's cunning way,
Mason of his walls of clay,
And the architectural plans
Of gray hornet artisans!
For, eschewing books and tasks,
Nature answers all he asks;
Hand in hand with her he walks,
Face to face with her he talks,
Part and parcel of her joy,—
Blessings on the barefoot boy!

Oh for boyhood's time of June,
Crowding years in one brief moon,
When all things I heard or saw,
Me, their master, waited for.
I was rich in flowers and trees,
Humming-birds and honey-bees;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted mole his spade;
For my taste the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone;
Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night,
Whispering at the garden wall,
Talked with me from fall to fall;
Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond,
Mine the walnut slopes beyond,
Mine, on bending orchard trees,
Apples of Hesperides![1]
Still as my horizon grew,
Larger grew my riches too;
All the world I saw or knew
Seemed a complex Chinese toy,
Fashioned for a barefoot boy!

Oh for festal dainties spread,
Like my bowl of milk and bread;
Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,
On the door-stone, gray and rude!
O'er me, like a regal tent,
Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,

---

[1] See note on page 322.

Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,
Looped in many a wind-swung fold;
While for music came the play
Of the pied frogs' orchestra;
And, to light the noisy choir,
Lit the fly his lamp of fire.
I was monarch: pomp and joy
Waited on the barefoot boy!

Cheerily, then, my little man,
Live and laugh, as boyhood can!
Though the flinty slopes be hard,
Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,
Every morn shall lead thee through
Fresh baptisms of the dew;
Every evening from thy feet
Shall the cool wind kiss the heat:
All too soon these feet must hide
In the prison cells of pride,
Lose the freedom of the sod,
Like a colt's for work be shod,
Made to tread the mills of toil,
Up and down in ceaseless moil:
Happy if their track be found
Never on forbidden ground;
Happy if they sink not in
Quick and treacherous sands of sin.
Ah! that thou couldst know thy joy,
Ere it passes, barefoot boy!

(1856)

A FAREWELL

CHARLES KINGSLEY

My fairest child, I have no song to give you;
  No lark could pipe to skies so dull and gray:
Yet, ere we part, one lesson I can leave you
    For every day.

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever;
  Do noble things, not dream them, all day long:
And so make life, death, and that vast forever
    One grand, sweet song.

(1856)

DAYS

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

the do
often unnoce

Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.
I, in my pleached[1] garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her solemn fillet[2] saw the scorn.

(1857)

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

["Suggested," said Holmes, "by looking at a section of one of those chambered shells to which is given the name of Pearly Nautilus. . . . A section will show you the series of enlarging compartments successively dwelt in by the animal that inhabits the shell, which is built in a widening spiral."]

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
  Sails the unshadowed main,—
  The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
  And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
  Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
  And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
  Before thee lies revealed,—
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
  That spread his lustrous coil;
  Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,

---

[1] *pleached.* Bowered (with branches).
[2] *fillet.* Worn in the hair of a priestess.

Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton[1] blew from wreathèd horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

(1858)

THE LIVING TEMPLE

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

[Originally called "The Anatomist's Hymn." It will be seen how the author interprets poetically the respiratory and circulatory systems, the muscular and nervous structure, the organs of sight and hearing, and the brain and nerves.]

Not in the world of light alone,
Where God has built his blazing throne,
Nor yet alone in earth below,
With belted seas that come and go,
And endless isles of sunlit green,
Is all thy Maker's glory seen:
Look in upon thy wondrous frame,—
Eternal wisdom still the same!

The smooth, soft air with pulse-like waves
Flows murmuring through its hidden caves,
Whose streams of brightening purple rush,
Fired with a new and livelier blush,
While all their burden of decay
The ebbing current steals away,
And red with Nature's flame they start
From the warm fountains of the heart.

No rest that throbbing slave may ask,
Forever quivering o'er his task,
While far and wide a crimson jet
Leaps forth to fill the woven net
Which in unnumbered crossing tides
The flood of burning life divides,
Then, kindling each decaying part,
Creeps back to find the throbbing h[illegible]

But warmed with that unchanging flame
Behold the outward moving frame,
Its living marbles jointed strong
With glistening band and silvery thong,
And linked to reason's guiding reins
By myriad rings in trembling chains,
Each graven with the threaded zone
Which claims it as the master's own.

See how yon beam of seeming white
Is braided out of seven-hued light,
Yet in those lucid globes no ray
By any chance shall break astray.
Hark how the rolling surge of sound,
Arches and spirals circling round,
Wakes the hushed spirit through thine ear
With music it is heaven to hear.

Then mark the cloven sphere that holds
All thought in its mysterious folds;
That feels sensation's faintest thrill,
And flashes forth the sovereign will;
Think on the stormy world that dwells
Locked in its dim and clustering cells!
The lightning gleams of power it sheds
Along its hollow glassy threads!

O Father! grant thy love divine
To make these mystic temples thine!
When wasting age and wearying strife
Have sapped the leaning walls of life,
When darkness gathers over all,
And the last tottering pillars fall,
Take the poor dust thy mercy warms,
And mould it into heavenly forms!

(1858)

A SUN-DAY HYMN

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

Lord of all being! throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star;
Centre and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near!

---

[1] *Triton.* A Greek sea-god, with trumpet of shell.

Sun of our life, thy quickening ray
Sheds on our path the glow of day;
Star of our hope, thy softened light
Cheers the long watches of the night.

Our midnight is thy smile withdrawn;
Our noontide is thy gracious dawn;
Our rainbow arch thy mercy's sign;
All, save the clouds of sin, are thine!

Lord of all life, below, above,
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love,
Before thy ever-blazing throne
We ask no lustre of our own.

Grant us thy truth to make us free,
And kindling hearts that burn for thee,
Till all thy living altars claim
One holy light, one heavenly flame!

(1859)

DRIFTING

THOMAS BUCHANAN READ

My soul to-day
Is far away,
Sailing the Vesuvian Bay;
My wingèd boat,
A bird afloat,
Swings round the purple peaks remote:—

Round purple peaks
It sails, and seeks
Blue inlets and their crystal creeks,
Where high rocks throw,
Through deeps below,
A duplicated golden glow.

Far, vague, and dim,
The mountains swim;
While on Vesuvius' misty brim,
With outstretched hands,
The gray smoke stands
O'erlooking the volcanic lands.

Here Ischia[1] smiles
O'er liquid miles;
And yonder, bluest of the isles,
Calm Capri waits,
Her sapphire gates
Beguiling to her bright estates.

I heed not, if
My rippling skiff
Float swift or slow from cliff to cliff;
With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Under the walls of Paradise.

Under the walls
Where swells and falls
The Bay's deep breast at intervals
At peace I lie,
Blown softly by,
A cloud upon this liquid sky.

The day, so mild,
Is Heaven's own child,
With Earth and Ocean reconciled;
The airs I feel
Around me steal
Are murmuring to the murmuring keel.

Over the rail
My hand I trail
Within the shadow of the sail,
A joy intense,
The cooling sense
Glides down my drowsy indolence.

With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Where Summer sings and never dies,—
O'erveiled with vines
She glows and shines
Among her future oil and wines.

Her children, hid
The cliffs amid,
Are gamboling with the gamboling kid;
Or down the walls,
With tipsy calls,
Laugh on the rock like waterfalls.

The fisher's child,
With tresses wild,
Unto the smooth, bright sand beguiled,
With glowing lips
Sings as she skips,
Or gazes at the far-off ships.

Yon deep bark goes
Where traffic blows,
From lands of sun to lands of snows;
This happier one,—
Its course is run
From lands of snow to lands of sun.

---

[1] *Ischia.* Ischia and Capri (line 22) are islands at the northern and southern horns of the Bay of Naples.

O happy ship,
To rise and dip,
With the blue crystal at your lip!
O happy crew,
My heart with you
Sails, and sails, and sings anew!

No more, no more
The worldly shore
Upbraids me with its loud uproar:
With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Under the walls of Paradise!

(1860)

OUR COUNTRY

JULIA WARD HOWE

On primal rocks she wrote her name,
Her towers were reared on holy graves,
The golden seed that bore her came
Swift-winged with prayer o'er ocean waves.

The Forest bowed his solemn crest,
And open flung his sylvan doors;
Meek Rivers led the appointed Guest
To clasp the wide-embracing shores;

Till, fold by fold, the broidered Land
To swell her virgin vestments grew,
While Sages, strong in heart and hand,
Her virtue's fiery girdle drew.

O Exile of the wrath of Kings!
O Pilgrim Ark of Liberty!
The refuge of divinest things,
Their record must abide in thee.

First in the glories of thy front
Let the crown jewel Truth be found;
Thy right hand fling with generous wont
Love's happy chain to furthest bound.

Let Justice with the faultless scales
Hold fast the worship of thy sons,
Thy commerce spread her shining sails
Where no dark tide of rapine runs.

So link thy ways to those of God,
So follow firm the heavenly laws,
That stars may greet thee, warrior-browed,
And storm-sped angels hail thy cause.

O Land, the measure of our prayers,
Hope of the world, in grief and wrong;
Be thine the blessing of the years,
The gift of faith, the crown of song.

(1861)

BATTLE-HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

JULIA WARD HOWE

[Written as a war-song for the Union cause in the Civil War, and set to the tune of "John Brown's Body," a favorite among the soldiers.]

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps;
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps:
His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel, writ in burnished rows of steel:
"As ye deal with My contemners, so with you My grace shall deal;
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with His heel![1]
Since God is marching on."

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment-seat;
Oh! be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me:
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.

(1862)

[1] See *Genesis* 3:14-15.

DIRGE FOR A SOLDIER

GEORGE HENRY BOKER

[In memory of General Philip Kearny, who fell in battle in the Civil War.]

Close his eyes; his work is done!
What to him is friend or foeman,
Rise of moon, or set of sun,
Hand of man, or kiss of woman?
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? He cannot know;
Lay him low!

As man may, he fought his fight,
Proved his truth by his endeavor;
Let him sleep in solemn night,
Sleep forever and forever.
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? He cannot know;
Lay him low!

Fold him in his country's stars,
Roll the drum and fire the volley!
What to him are all our wars,
What but death-bemocking folly?
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? He cannot know;
Lay him low!

Leave him to God's watching eye;
Trust him to the hand that made him.
Mortal love weeps idly by;
God alone has power to aid him.
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? He cannot know!
Lay him low!

(1862)

SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE NOUGHT AVAILETH

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

Say not the struggle nought availeth,
The labor and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.[1]

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright.

(1862)

UP-HILL

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labor you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.

(1862)

SONG

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress-tree:
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet;
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

---

[1] *main.* Ocean.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

(1862)

YOUNG AND OLD

CHARLES KINGSLEY

When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green,
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away!
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down;
Creep home, and take your place there,
The spent and maimed among:
God grant you find one face there
You loved when all was young.

(1863)

SONGS OF SEVEN

JEAN INGELOW

Seven Times One

There's no dew left on the daisies and clover,
There's no rain left in heaven;
I've said my "seven times" over and over,—
Seven times one are seven.

I am old, so old, I can write a letter;
My birthday lessons are done;
The lambs play always, they know no better,—
They are only one times one.

O moon! in the night I have seen you sailing
And shining so round and low;
You were bright! ah, bright! but your light is failing,—
You are nothing now but a bow.

You moon, have you done something wrong in heaven
That God has hidden your face?
I hope if you have you will soon be forgiven,
And shine again in your place.

O velvet bee, you're a dusty fellow,
You've powdered your legs with gold!
O brave marsh marybuds, rich and yellow,
Give me your money to hold!

O columbine, open your folded wrapper,
Where two twin turtle-doves dwell!
O cuckoopint, toll me the purple clapper
That hangs in your clear green bell!

And show me your nest with the young ones in it,—
I will not steal them away;
I am old! you may trust me, linnet, linnet—
I am seven times one to-day.

Seven Times Two

You bells in the steeple, ring, ring out your changes,
How many soever they be,
And let the brown meadow-lark's note as he ranges
Come over, come over to me.

Yet birds' clearest carol by fall or by swelling
No magical sense conveys,
And bells have forgotten their old art of telling
The fortune of future days.

"Turn again, turn again," once they rang cheerily,
While a boy listened alone;
Made his heart yearn again, musing so wearily
All by himself on a stone.

Poor bells! I forgive you; your good days are over,
And mine, they are yet to be;
No listening, no longing shall aught, aught discover,—
You leave the story to me.

The foxglove shoots out of the green matted heather,
Preparing her hoods of snow;
She was idle, and slept till the sunshiny weather:
Oh, children take long to grow.

I wish and I wish that the spring would go faster,
Nor long summer bide so late,
And I could go on like the foxglove and aster,
For some things are ill to wait.

I wait for the day when dear hearts shall discover,
While dear hands are laid on my head,—
"The child is a woman, the book may close over,
For all the lessons are said."

I wait for my story—the birds cannot sing it,
Not one, as he sits on the tree;
The bells cannot ring it, but long years O bring it!
Such as I wish it to be.

(1863)

BOSTON HYMN

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

[Emerson read this poem at a meeting held in Music Hall, Boston, on January 1, 1863, in celebration of President Lincoln's Proclamation of Emancipation.]

The word of the Lord by night
To the watching Pilgrims came,
As they sat by the seaside,
And filled their hearts with flame.

God said, I am tired of kings,
I suffer them no more;
Up to my ear the morning brings
The outrage of the poor.

Think ye I made this ball
A field of havoc and war,
Where tyrants great and tyrants small
Might harry the weak and poor?

My angel,—his name is Freedom,—
Choose him to be your king;
He shall cut pathways east and west
And fend you with his wing.

Lo! I uncover the land
Which I hid of old time in the West,
As the sculptor uncovers the statue
When he has wrought his best;

I show Columbia, of the rocks
Which dip their foot in the seas,
And soar to the air-borne flocks
Of clouds, and the boreal[1] fleece.

I will divide my goods;
Call in the wretch and slave:
None shall rule but the humble,
And none but Toil shall have.

I will have never a noble,
No lineage counted great;
Fishers and choppers and ploughmen
Shall constitute a state.

Go, cut down trees in the forest
And trim the straightest boughs;
Cut down trees in the forest
And build me a wooden house.

Call the people together,
The young men and the sires,
The digger in the harvest field,
Hireling and him that hires;

And here in a pine state-house
They shall choose men to rule
In every needful faculty,
In church and state and school.

Lo, now! if these poor men
Can govern the land and sea,
And make just laws below the sun,
As planets faithful be.

And ye shall succor men;
'Tis nobleness to serve:
Help them who cannot help again:
Beware from right to swerve.

I break your bonds and masterships,
And I unchain the slave:
Free be his heart and hand henceforth
As wind and wandering wave.

I cause from every creature
His proper good to flow:
As much as he is and doeth,
So much he shall bestow.

[1] *boreal*, Northern.

But, laying hands on another
To coin his labor and sweat,
He goes in pawn to his victim
For eternal years in debt.

To-day unbind the captive,
So only are ye unbound;
Lift up a people from the dust,
Trump of their rescue, sound!

Pay ransom to the owner,
And fill the bag to the brim.
Who is the owner? The slave is owner,
And ever was. Pay him.

O North! give him beauty for rags,
And honor, O South! for his shame;
Nevada! coin thy golden crags
With Freedom's image and name.

Up! and the dusky race
That sat in darkness long,—
Be swift their feet as antelopes,
And as behemoth strong.

Come, East and West and North,
By races, as snow-flakes,
And carry my purpose forth,
Which neither halts nor shakes.

My will fulfilled shall be,
For, in daylight or in dark,
My thunderbolt has eyes to see
His way home to the mark.

(1863)

RABBI BEN EZRA

ROBERT BROWNING

[In this monologue Browning puts his own philosophy of life, especially that concerning the development of the soul from youth to age, into the mouth of a rabbi who actually lived and taught in the 12th century; his name appears as Ibn Ezra or Abenezra. From certain of his writings Browning was led to associate with him the thoughts here developed; for example, he had said, "Man has the sole privilege of becoming superior to the beast and the fowl" (compare stanzas 4 and 5), and again, "The soul of man is called lonely because it is separated during its union with the body from the universal soul" (compare line 48, etc.).]

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was
  made:
Our times are in his hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all,
  nor be afraid!"

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best re-
  call?"
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearned, "Nor Jove,[1] nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends,
  transcends them all!"

Not for such hopes and fears,
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by
  a spark.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men:
Irks care[2] the crop-full bird? Frets
  doubt the maw-crammed beast?

Rejoice we are allied
To That which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of[3] God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take,
  I must believe.

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but
  go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never
  grudge the throe!

For thence,—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What ~~I aspired to be,~~
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would
  not sink i' the scale.

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit.

---

[1] *Jove.* Jupiter.
[2] *Irks care.* Does care disturb.
[3] *hold of.* Are related to.

Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?
To man, propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn:
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once "How good to live and learn"?

Not once beat "Praise be thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw power, see now Love perfect too;
Perfect I call thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what thou shalt do!"

For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute,—gain most, as we did best!

Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry, "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!"

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:[1]
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a God though in the germ.

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new:
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armor to indue.[2]

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old.

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the gray:
A whisper from the west
Shoots—"Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth: here dies another day."

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
"This rage was right i' the main,
That acquiescence vain:
The Future I may face, now I have proved the Past."

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day:
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

As it was better,[3] youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made:
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age: wait death nor be afraid!

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

---

[1] *term.* End.

[2] *indue.* Put on.

[3] *better.* Note that the comma after this word, both here and in 112, represents an omitted "that."

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I,[1] the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me; we all surmise,
They this thing, and I that: whom shall my soul believe?

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work" must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

But all,[2] the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize to-day!"

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.

He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic[3] circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, would fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.[4]

What though the earlier grooves,
Which ran the laughing loves[5]
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst thou with earth's wheel?

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who mouldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colors rife,
Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake thy thirst:

So, take and use thy work!
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!

(1864)

---

[1] *I.* Here, and in the following line, the comma represents an omitted "whom."

[2] *all.* Here, and in line 149, "that" is omitted.

[3] *plastic.* Formative.

[4] *impressed.* Moulded.

[5] *loves.* Cupids.

more dramatic

PROSPICE

ROBERT BROWNING

[The title means "Look forward." The poem was written shortly after the death of Mrs. Browning, to whom the conclusion is addressed.]

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

(1864)

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

WALT WHITMAN

[On the death of Lincoln at the conclusion of the Civil War.]

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells:
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!
But I with mournful tread
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

(1865)

ODE RECITED AT THE HARVARD COMMEMORATION

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

[This poem was read at a commemoration service in honor of Harvard men who had fallen in the Civil War, July 21, 1865, and was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in September.]

I

Weak-winged is song,
Nor aims at that clear-ethered height
Whither the brave deed climbs for light:
We seem to do them wrong,
Bringing our robin's-leaf[1] to deck their hearse
Who in warm life-blood wrote their nobler verse,
Our trivial song to honor those who come
With ears attuned to strenuous trump and drum,
And shaped in squadron-strophes their desire,
Live battle-odes whose lines were steel and fire:
Yet sometimes feathered words are strong,
A gracious memory to buoy up and save
From Lethe's[2] dreamless ooze, the common grave
Of the unventurous throng.

II

To-day our Reverend Mother welcomes back
Her wisest Scholars, those who understood
The deeper teaching of her mystic tome,
And offered their fresh lives to make it good:
No lore of Greece or Rome,
No science peddling with the names of things,
Or reading stars to find inglorious fates,
Can lift our life with wings
Far from Death's idle gulf that for the many waits,
And lengthen out our dates
With that clear fame whose memory sings
In manly hearts to come, and nerves them and dilates:
Nor such thy teaching, Mother of us all!
Not such the trumpet-call
Of thy diviner mood,
That could thy sons entice
From happy homes and toils, the fruitful nest
Of those half-virtues which the world calls best,
Into War's tumult rude;
But rather far that stern device
The sponsors chose that round thy cradle stood
In the dim, unventured wood,
The VERITAS[3] that lurks beneath
The letter's unprolific sheath,
Life of whate'er makes life worth living,
Seed-grain of high emprise, immortal food,
One heavenly thing whereof earth hath the giving.

III

Many loved Truth, and lavished life's best oil
Amid the dust of books to find her,
Content at last, for guerdon of their toil,
With the cast mantle she hath left behind her.
Many in sad faith sought for her,
Many with crossed hands sighed for her;
But these, our brothers, fought for her,
At life's dear peril wrought for her,
So loved her that they died for her,
Tasting the raptured fleetness
Of her divine completeness:
Their higher instinct knew
Those love her best who to themselves are true,
And what they dare to dream of, dare to do;
They followed her and found her
Where all may hope to find,
Not in the ashes of the burnt-out mind,
But beautiful, with danger's sweetness round her.
Where faith made whole with deed
Breathes its awakening breath
Into the lifeless creed,
They saw her plumed and mailed,
With sweet, stern face unveiled,
And all-repaying eyes, look proud on them in death.

IV

Our slender life runs rippling by, and glides
Into the silent hollow of the past;
What is there that abides

---

[1] *robin's-leaf*. Like those brought by the robins to cover the "babes in the wood."

[2] *Lethe*. The river of forgetfulness.

[3] *Veritas*. Truth,—the Harvard motto.

To make the next age better for the last?
Is earth too poor to give us
Something to live for here that shall outlive us?
Some more substantial boon
Than such as flows and ebbs with Fortune's fickle moon?
The little that we see
From doubt is never free;
The little that we do
Is but half-nobly true;
With our laborious hiving
What men call treasure, and the gods call dross,
Life seems a jest of Fate's contriving,
Only secure in every one's conniving,
A long account of nothings paid with loss,
Where we poor puppets, jerked by unseen wires,
After our little hour of strut and rave,
With all our pasteboard passions and desires,
Loves, hates, ambitions, and immortal fires.
Are tossed pell-mell together in the grave.
But stay! no age was e'er degenerate,
Unless men held it at too cheap a rate,
For in our likeness still we shape our fate.
Ah, there is something here
Unfathomed by the cynic's sneer,
Something that gives our feeble light
A high immunity from Night,
Something that leaps life's narrow bars
To claim its birthright with the hosts of heaven;
A seed of sunshine that can leaven
Our earthy dulness with the beams of stars,
And glorify our clay
With light from fountains elder than the Day;
A conscience more divine than we,
A gladness fed with secret tears,
A vexing, forward-reaching sense
Of some more noble permanence;
A light across the sea,
Which haunts the soul and will not let it be,
Still beaconing from the heights of undegenerate years.

V

Whither leads the path
To ampler fates that leads?
Not down through flowery meads,
To reap an aftermath
Of youth's vainglorious weeds;
But up the steep, amid the wrath
And shock of deadly hostile creeds,
Where the world's best hope and stay
By battle's flashes gropes a desperate way,
And every turf the fierce foot clings to bleeds.
Peace hath her not ignoble wreath,
Ere yet the sharp, decisive word
Light the black lips of cannon, and the sword
Dreams in its easeful sheath;
But some day the live coal behind the thought,
Whether from Baäl's stone obscene,
Or from the shrine serene
Of God's pure altar brought,
Bursts up in flame; the war of tongue and pen
Learns with what deadly purpose it was fraught,
And, helpless in the fiery passion caught,
Shakes all the pillared state with shock of men:
Some day the soft Ideal that we wooed
Confronts us fiercely, foe-beset, pursued,
And cries reproachful: "Was it, then, my praise,
And not myself was loved? Prove now thy truth;
I claim of thee the promise of thy youth;
Give me thy life, or cower in empty phrase,
The victim of thy genius, not its mate!"
Life may be given in many ways,
And loyalty to Truth be sealed
As bravely in the closet as the field,
So bountiful is Fate;
But then to stand beside her,
When craven churls deride her,
To front a lie in arms and not to yield,
This shows, methinks, God's plan
And measure of a stalwart man,
Limbed like the old heroic breeds,
Who stands self-poised on manhood's solid earth,
Not forced to frame excuses for his birth,
Fed from within with all the strength he needs.

VI

Such was he, our Martyr-Chief,
Whom late the Nation he had led,
With ashes on her head,
Wept with the passion of an angry grief:

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Forgive me, if from present things I turn
To speak what in my heart will beat and burn,
And hang my wreath on his world-honored urn.
Nature, they say, doth dote,
And cannot make a man
Save on some worn-out plan,
Repeating us by rote:
For him her Old-World moulds aside she threw,
And, choosing sweet clay from the breast
Of the unexhausted West,
With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,
Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true.
How beautiful to see
Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,
Who loved his charge, but never loved to lead;
One whose meek flock the people joyed to be,
Not lured by any cheat of birth,
But by his clear-grained human worth,
And brave old wisdom of sincerity!
They knew that outward grace is dust;
They could not choose but trust
In that sure-footed mind's unfaltering skill,
And supple-tempered will
That bent like perfect steel to spring again and thrust.
His was no lonely mountan-peak of mind,
Thrusting to thin air o'er our cloudy bars,
A sea-mark now, now lost in vapors blind;
Broad prairie rather, genial, level-lined,
Fruitful and friendly for all humankind,
Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of loftiest stars.
Nothing of Europe here,
Or, then, of Europe fronting morn-ward still,
Ere any names of Serf and Peer
Could Nature's equal scheme deface
And thwart her genial will;
Here was a type of the true elder race,
And one of Plutarch's men[1] talked with us face to face.
I praise him not; it were too late;
And some innative weakness there must be
In him who condescends to victory
Such as the Present gives, and cannot wait,
Safe in himself as in a fate.
So always firmly he:
He knew to bide his time,
And can his fame abide,
Still patient in his simple faith sublime,
Till the wise years decide.
Great captains, with their guns and drums,
Disturb our judgment for the hour,
But at last silence comes;
These all are gone, and, standing like a tower,
Our children shall behold his fame,
The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil, the first American.

VII

Long as man's hope insatiate can discern
Or only guess some more inspiring goal
Outside of Self, enduring as the pole,
Along whose course the flying axles burn
Of spirits bravely-pitched, earth's manlier brood;
Long as below we cannot find
The meed that stills the inexorable mind;
So long this faith to some ideal Good,
Under whatever mortal name it masks,
Freedom, Law, Country, this ethereal mood
That thanks the Fates for their severer tasks,
Feeling its challenged pulses leap,
While others skulk in subterfuges cheap,
And, set in Danger's van, has all the boon it asks,
Shall win man's praise and woman's love,
Shall be a wisdom that we set above
All other skills and gifts to culture dear,
A virtue round whose forehead we enwreathe
Laurels that with a living passion breathe

---

[1] A man like one of the old-world heroes celebrated by Plutarch in his *Lives*.

When other crowns grow, while we twine them, sear.
What brings us thronging these high rites to pay,
And seal these hours the noblest of our year,
Save that our brothers found this better way?

VIII

We sit here in the Promised Land
That flows with Freedom's honey and milk;
But 'twas they won it, sword in hand,
Making the nettle danger soft for us as silk.
We welcome back our bravest and our best;—
Ah me! not all! some come not with the rest,
Who went forth brave and bright as any here!
I strive to mix some gladness with my strain,
But the sad strings complain,
And will not please the ear:
I sweep them for a pæan, but they wane
Again and yet again
Into a dirge, and die away in pain.
In these brave ranks I only see the gaps,
Thinking of dear ones whom the dumb turf wraps,
Dark to the triumph which they died to gain:
Fitlier may others greet the living,
For me the past is unforgiving;
I with uncovered head
Salute the sacred dead,
Who went, and who return not.—Say not so!
'Tis not the grapes of Canaan[1] that repay,
But the high faith that failed not by the way;
Virtue treads paths that end not in the grave;
No bar of endless night exiles the brave;
And to the saner mind
We rather seem the dead that stayed behind.
Blow, trumpets, all your exultations blow!
For never shall their aureoled presence lack:[2]
I see them muster in a gleaming row,
With ever-youthful brows that nobler show;
We find in our dull road their shining track;
In every nobler mood
We feel the orient of their spirit glow,
Part of our life's unalterable good,
Of all our saintlier aspiration;
They come transfigured back,
Secure from change in their high-hearted ways,
Beautiful evermore, and with the rays
Of morn on their white Shields of Expectation!

IX

But is there hope to save
Even this ethereal essence from the grave?
What ever 'scaped Oblivion's subtle wrong
Save a few clarion names, or golden threads of song?
Before my musing eye
The mighty ones of old sweep by,
Disvoicèd now and insubstantial things,
As noisy once as we; poor ghosts of kings,
Shadows of empire wholly gone to dust,
And many races, nameless long ago,
To darkness driven by that imperious gust
Of ever-rushing Time that here doth blow:
O visionary world, condition strange,
Where naught abiding is but only Change,
Where the deep-bolted stars themselves still shift and range!
Shall we to more continuance make pretence?
Renown builds tombs; a life-estate is Wit;
And, bit by bit,
The cunning years steal all from us but woe:
Leaves are we, whose decays no harvest sow.
But, when we vanish hence,
Shall they lie forceless in the dark below,
Save to make green their little length of sods,
Or deepen pansies for a year or two,
Who now to us are shining-sweet as gods?
Was dying all they had the skill to do?
That were not fruitless: but the Soul resents
Such short-lived service, as if blind events

---

[1] *grapes of Canaan.* See *Numbers* 13:23.
[2] *lack.* Be missing.

Ruled without her, or earth could so endure;
She claims a more divine investiture
Of longer tenure than Fame's airy rents;
Whate'er she touches doth her nature share;
Her inspiration haunts the ennobled air,
Gives eyes to mountains blind,
Ears to the deaf earth, voices to the wind,
And her clear trump sings succor everywhere
By lonely bivouacs to the wakeful mind;
For soul inherits all that soul could dare:
Yea, Manhood hath a wider span
And larger privilege of life than man.
The single deed, the private sacrifice,
So radiant now through proudly-hidden tears,
Is covered up ere long from mortal eyes
With thoughtless drift of the deciduous years;
But that high privilege that makes all men peers,
That leap of heart whereby a people rise
Up to a noble anger's height,
And, flamed on by the Fates, not shrink, but grow more bright,
That swift validity in noble veins,
Of choosing danger and disdaining shame,
Of being set on flame
By the pure fire that flies all contact base,
But wraps its chosen with angelic might,
These are imperishable gains,
Sure as the sun, medicinal as light,
These hold great futures in their lusty reins
And certify to earth a new imperial race.

X

Who now shall sneer?
Who dare again to say we trace
Our lines to a plebeian race?
Roundhead and Cavalier!
Dumb are those names erewhile in battle loud;
Dream-footed as the shadow of a cloud,
They flit across the ear:
That is best blood that hath most iron in't,
To edge resolve with, pouring without stint
For what makes manhood dear.
Tell us not of Plantagenets,
Hapsburgs, and Guelfs,[1] whose thin bloods crawl
Down from some victor in a border-brawl!
How poor their outworn coronets,
Matched with one leaf of that plain civic wreath
Our brave for honor's blazon shall bequeath,
Through whose desert a rescued Nation sets
Her heel on treason, and the trumpet hears
Shout victory, tingling Europe's sullen ears
With vain resentments and more vain regrets!

XI

Not in anger, not in pride,
Pure from passion's mixture rude,
Ever to base earth allied,
But with far-heard gratitude,
Still with heart and voice renewed,
To heroes living and dear martyrs dead,
The strain should close that consecrates our brave.
Lift the heart and lift the head!
Lofty be its mood and grave,
Not without a martial ring,
Not without a prouder tread
And a peal of exultation:
Little right has he to sing
Through whose heart in such an hour
Beats no march of conscious power,
Sweeps no tumult of elation!
'Tis no Man we celebrate,
By his country's victories great,
A hero half, and half the whim of Fate,
But the pith and marrow of a Nation
Drawing force from all her men,
Highest, humblest, weakest, all,
For her time of need, and then
Pulsing it again through them,
Till the basest can no longer cower,
Feeling his soul spring up divinely tall,
Touched but in passing by her mantle-hem.
Come back, then, noble pride, for 'tis her dower!
How could poet ever tower,
If his passions, hopes, and fears,
If his triumphs and his tears,
Kept not measure with his people?

---

[1] The royal families of Europe.

Boom, cannon, boom to all the winds and waves!
Clash out, glad bells, from every rocking steeple!
Banners, advance with triumph, bend your staves!
And from every mountain-peak
Let beacon-fire to answering beacon speak,
Katahdin tell Monadnock, Whiteface[1] he,
And so leap on in light from sea to sea,
Till the glad news be sent
Across a kindling continent,
Making earth feel more firm and air breathe braver:
"Be proud! for she is saved, and all have helped to save her!
She that lifts up the manhood of the poor,
She of the open soul and open door,
With room about her hearth for all mankind!
The fire is dreadful in her eyes no more;
From her bold front the helm she doth unbind,
Sends all her handmaid armies back to spin,
And bids her navies, that so lately hurled
Their crashing battle, hold their thunders in,
Swimming like birds of calm along the unharmful shore.
No challenge sends she to the elder world,
That looked askance and hated; a light scorn
Plays o'er her mouth, as round her mighty knees
She calls her children back, and waits the morn
Of nobler day, enthroned between her subject seas."

XII

Bow down, dear Land, for thou hast found release!
Thy God, in these distempered days,
Hath taught thee the sure wisdom of His ways,
And through thine enemies hath wrought thy peace!
Bow down in prayer and praise!
No poorest in thy borders but may now
Lift to the juster skies a man's enfranchised brow.
O Beautiful! my Country! ours once more!
Smoothing thy gold of war-dishevelled hair
O'er such sweet brows as never other wore,
And letting thy set lips,
Freed from wrath's pale eclipse,
The rosy edges of their smile lay bare,
What words divine of lover or of poet
Could tell our love and make thee know it,
Among the Nations bright beyond compare?
What were our lives without thee?
What all our lives to save thee?
We reck not what we gave thee;
We will not dare to doubt thee,
But ask whatever else, and we will dare!

(1865)

A MATCH

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf,
Our lives would grow together
In sad or singing weather,
Blown fields or flowerful closes,[2]
Green pleasure or gray grief;
If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf.

If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune,
With double sound and single
Delight our lips would mingle,
With kisses glad as birds are
That get sweet rain at noon;
If I were what the words are
And love were like the tune.

If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death,
We'd shine and snow together
Ere March made sweet the weather
With daffodil and starling
And hours of fruitful breath;
If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death.

---

[1] Mountains of New England.

[2] *closes.* Enclosed gardens.

If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy,
We'd play for lives and seasons
With loving looks and treasons
And tears of night and morrow
And laughs of maid and boy;
If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy.

If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May,
We'd throw with leaves for hours,
And draw for days with flowers,
Till day like night were shady
And night were bright like day;
If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May.

If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain,
We'd hunt down love together,
Pluck out his flying-feather,
And teach his feet a measure,
And find his mouth a rein:
If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain.

(1866)

RUGBY CHAPEL

MATTHEW ARNOLD

[In memory of the poet's father, Dr. Thomas Arnold, the great head-master of Rugby School, who died in 1842 and was buried in the school chapel.]

Coldly, sadly descends
The autumn-evening. The field
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
Of withered leaves, and the elms,
Fade into dimness apace,
Silent;—hardly a shout
From a few boys late at their play!
The lights come out in the street,
In the schoolroom windows;—but cold,
Solemn, unlighted, austere,
Through the gathering darkness, arise
The chapel-walls, in whose bound
Thou, my father! art laid.

There thou dost lie, in the gloom
Of the autumn evening. But ah!
That word *gloom* to my mind
Brings thee back in the light
Of thy radiant vigor again.
In the gloom of November we passed
Days not dark at thy side;
Seasons impaired not the ray
Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.
Such thou wast! and I stand
In the autumn evening, and think
Of bygone autumns with thee.

Fifteen years have gone round
Since thou arosest to tread,
In the summer-morning, the road
Of death, at a call unforeseen,
Sudden. For fifteen years,
We who till then in thy shade
Rested as under the boughs
Of a mighty oak, have endured
Sunshine and rain as we might,
Bare, unshaded, alone,
Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labor-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm![1]

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past,
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live,
Prompt, unwearied, as here!
Still thou upraisest with zeal
The humble good from the ground,
Sternly repressest the bad;
Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
Those who with half-open eyes
Tread the border-land dim
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
Succorest. This was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth?
Most men eddy about
Here and there—eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurled in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing; and then they die,—
Perish; and no one asks
Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves,
In the moonlit solitudes mild
Of the midmost Ocean, have swelled,
Foamed for a moment, and gone.

---

[1] With these lines compare Tennyson's "Wellington Ode," lines 255-58, page 312.

And there are some whom a thirst
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
Not with the crowd to be spent,
Not without aim to go round
In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain.
Ah yes! some of us strive
Not without action to die
Fruitless, but something to snatch
From dull oblivion, nor all
Glut the devouring grave.
We, we have chosen our path,—
Path to a clear-purposed goal,
Path of advance; but it leads
A long, steep journey, through sunk
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.
Cheerful, with friends, we set forth:
Then, on the height, comes the storm.
Thunder crashes from rock
To rock; the cataracts reply;
Lightnings dazzle our eyes;
Roaring torrents have breached
The track; the stream-bed descends
In the place where the wayfarer once
Planted his footstep—the spray
Boils o'er its borders! aloft,
The unseen snow-beds dislodge
Their hanging ruin. Alas,
Havoc is made in our train!
Friends who set forth at our side
Falter, are lost in the storm.
We, we only are left!
With frowning foreheads, with lips
Sternly compressed, we strain on,
On—and at nightfall at last
Come to the end of our way,
To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;
Where the gaunt and taciturn host
Stands on the threshold, the wind
Shaking his thin white hairs,
Holds his lantern to scan
Our storm-beat figures, and asks,—
Whom in our party we bring?
Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer, We bring
Only ourselves! we lost
Sight of the rest in the storm.
Hardly ourselves we fought through,
Stripped, without friends, as we are.
Friends, companions, and train,
The avalanche swept from our side.

But thou wouldst not *alone*
Be saved, my father! *alone*
Conquer and come to thy goal,
Leaving the rest in the wild.
We were weary, and we
Fearful, and we in our march
Fain to drop down and to die.
Still thou turnedst, and still
Beckonedst the trembler, and still
Gavest the weary thy hand.
If, in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet,
Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing: to us thou wast still
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself,
And, at the end of thy day,
O faithful shepherd, to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

And through thee I believe
In the noble and great who are gone;
Pure souls honored and blest
By former ages, who else—
Such, so soulless, so poor,
Is the race of men whom I see—
Seemed but a dream of the heart,
Seemed but a cry of desire.
Yes! I believe that there lived
Others like thee in the past,
Not like the men of the crowd
Who all round me to-day
Bluster or cringe, and make life
Hideous and arid and vile;
But souls tempered with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God!—or sons
Shall I not call you? because
Not as servants ye knew
Your Father's innermost mind,
His who unwillingly sees
One of his little ones lost,—
Yours is the praise, if mankind
Hath not as yet in its march
Fainted and fallen and died.

See! In the rocks of the world
Marches the host of mankind,
A feeble, wavering line.
Where are they tending? A God
Marshaled them, gave them their goal.
Ah, but the way is so long!
Years have they been in the wild:
Sore thirst plagues them; the rocks,
Rising all round, overawe;
Factions divide them; their host
Threatens to break, to dissolve.
—Ah! keep, keep them combined!
Else, of the myriads who fill

That army, not one shall arrive;
Sole they shall stray; in the rocks
Stagger forever in vain,
Die one by one in the waste.

Then, in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Ye like angels appear,
Radiant with ardor divine.
Beacons of hope, ye appear!
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.
Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away.
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, re-inspire the brave.
Order, courage, return;
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On to the City of God.

(1867)

EAST LONDON

MATTHEW ARNOLD

'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,
And the pale weaver, through his window seen
In Spitalfields, looked thrice dispirited.
I met a preacher there I knew, and said:
"Ill and o'erworked, how fare you in this scene?"
"Bravely!" said he, "for I of late have been
Much cheered with thoughts of Christ, the *Living Bread*."

O human soul! as long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,
To cheer thee and to right thee if thou roam,
Not with lost toil thou laborest through the night!
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home.

(1867)

THE ETERNAL GOODNESS

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

[The closing portion of a poem of twenty-two stanzas.]

I know not what the future hath
  Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
  His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak
  To bear an untried pain,
The bruised reed He will not break,
  But strengthen and sustain.

No offering of my own I have,
  Nor works my faith to prove;
I can but give the gifts He gave,
  And plead his love for love.

And so beside the Silent Sea
  I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
  On ocean or on shore.

I know not where his islands lift
  Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
  Beyond his love and care.

O brothers! if my faith is vain,
  If hopes like these betray,
Pray for me that my feet may gain
  The sure and safer way.

And Thou, O Lord! by whom are seen
  Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me if too close I lean
  My human heart on Thee!

(1867)

THE STEAM THRESHING MACHINE

CHARLES TENNYSON-TURNER

Flush with the pond the lurid furnace burned
At eve, while smoke and vapor filled the yard;
The gloomy winter sky was dimly starred,
The fly-wheel with a mellow murmur turned;
While, ever rising on its mystic stair

In the dim light, from secret chambers borne,
The straw of harvest, severed from the corn,
Climbed, and fell over, in the murky air.

I thought of mind and matter, will and law,
And then of him[1] who set his stately seal
Of Roman words on all the forms he saw
Of old-world husbandry: *I* could but feel
With what a rich precision *he* would draw
The endless ladder and the booming wheel!

(1868)

ALADDIN

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

When I was a beggarly boy,
And lived in a cellar damp,
I had not a friend nor a toy,
But I had Aladdin's lamp;
When I could not sleep for the cold,
I had fire enough in my brain,
And builded, with roofs of gold,
My beautiful castles in Spain!

Since then I have toiled day and night,
I have money and power good store,
But I'd give all my lamps of silver bright,
For the one that is mine no more;
Take, Fortune, whatever you choose,—
You gave, and may snatch again;
I have nothing 'twould pain me to lose,
For I own no more castles in Spain!

(1868)

LOST DAYS

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

The lost days of my life until to-day,
What were they, could I see them on the street
Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of wheat
Sown once for food but trodden into clay?
Or golden coins squandered and still to pay?
Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?
Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat
The undoing throats of Hell, athirst alway?

I do not see them here; but after death
God knows I know the faces I shall see,
Each one a murdered self, with low last breath.
"I am thyself,—what hast thou done to me?"
"And I—and I—thyself," (lo! each one saith,)
"And thou thyself to all eternity!"

(1869)

LOVESIGHT

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

When do I see thee most, beloved one?
When in the light the spirits of mine eyes
Before thy face, their altar, solemnize
The worship of that Love through thee made known?
Or when in the dusk hours (we two alone),
Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies
Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,
And my soul only sees thy soul its own?

O love, my love! if I no more should see
Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—
How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope
The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,
The wind of Death's imperishable wing?

(1870)

IN SCHOOL-DAYS

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

Still sits the school-house by the road,
A ragged beggar sleeping;
Around it still the sumachs grow,
And blackberry-vines are creeping.

Within, the master's desk is seen,
Deep scarred by raps official;
The warping floor, the battered seats,
The jack-knife's carved initial;

[1] Virgil, who poetized Roman farm-life in his *Georgics*.

The charcoal frescoes on its wall;
Its door's worn sill, betraying
The feet that, creeping slow to school,
Went storming out to playing!

Long years ago a winter sun
Shone over it at setting;
Lit up its western window-panes,
And low eaves' icy fretting.

It touched the tangled golden curls,
And brown eyes full of grieving,
Of one who still her steps delayed
When all the school were leaving.

For near her stood the little boy
Her childish favor singled:
His cap pulled low upon a face
Where pride and shame were mingled.

Pushing with restless feet the snow
To right and left, he lingered;—
As restlessly her tiny hands
The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes; he felt
The soft hand's light caressing,
And heard the tremble of her voice,
As if a fault confessing.

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word:
I hate to go above you,
Because,"—the brown eyes lower fell,—
"Because, you see, I love you!"

Still memory to a gray-haired man
That sweet child-face is showing.
Dear girl! the grasses on her grave
Have forty years been growing!

He lives to learn, in life's hard school,
How few who pass above him
Lament their triumph and his loss,
Like her, because they love him.

(1870)

ST. JOHN BAPTIST

ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY

I think he had not heard of the far towns;
Nor of the deeds of men, nor of kings' crowns;
Before the thought of God took hold of him,
As he was sitting dreaming in the calm
Of one first noon, upon the desert's rim,
Beneath the tall fair shadows of the palm,
All overcome with some strange inward balm.

He numbered not the changes of the year,
The days, the nights, and he forgot all fear
Of death: each day he thought there should have been
A shining ladder set for him to climb
Athwart some opening in the heavens, e'en
To God's eternity, and see, sublime—
His face whose shadow passing fills all time.

But he walked through the ancient wilderness.
O, there the prints of feet were numberless
And holy all about him! And quite plain
He saw each spot an angel silver-shod
Had lit upon; where Jacob too had lain
The place seemed fresh,—and, bright and lately trod,
A long track showed where Enoch walked with God.[1]

And often, while the sacred darkness trailed
Along the mountains smitten and unveiled
By rending lightnings,—over all the noise
Of thunders and the earth that quaked and bowed
From its foundations—he could hear the voice
Of great Elias[2] prophesying loud
To Him whose face was covered by a cloud.

(1870)

DOROTHY Q.

A FAMILY PORTRAIT

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

[The portrait was an actual one, of Holmes's great-grandmother, Dorothy Quincy. His own note reads: "Dorothy was the daughter of Judge Edmund Quincy, and the niece of Josiah Quincy, Junior, the young patriot and orator, who died just before the American Revolution. . . . The son of the latter, Josiah Quincy, [was] the first mayor of Boston bearing that name."]

Grandmother's mother: her age, I guess,
Thirteen summers, or something less;
Girlish bust, but womanly air;
Smooth, square forehead with uprolled hair,

---

[1] See *Genesis* 28:11 and 5:24.

[2] *Elias*. Elijah; see 1 *Kings* 19:11-14 and *Matthew* 17:10-13.

Lips that lover has never kissed;
Taper fingers and slender wrist;
Hanging sleeves of stiff brocade;
So they painted the little maid.

On her hand a parrot green
Sits unmoving and broods serene.
Hold up the canvas full in view,—
Look! there's a rent the light shines through,
Dark with a century's fringe of dust,—
That was a Red-Coat's rapier-thrust!
Such is the tale the lady old,
Dorothy's daughter's daughter, told.

Who the painter was none may tell,—
One whose best was not over well;
Hard and dry, it must be confessed,
Flat as a rose that has long been pressed;
Yet in her cheek the hues are bright,
Dainty colors of red and white,
And in her slender shape are seen
Hint and promise of stately mien.

Look not on her with eyes of scorn,—
Dorothy Q. was a lady born!
Ay! since the galloping Normans came,
England's annals have known her name;
And still to the three-hilled rebel town[1]
Dear is that ancient name's renown,
For many a civic wreath they won,
The youthful sire and the gray-haired son.

O Damsel Dorothy! Dorothy Q.!
Strange is this gift that I owe to you;
Such a gift as never a king
Save to daughter or son might bring,—
All my tenure of heart and hand,
All my title to house and land;
Mother and sister and child and wife
And joy and sorrow and death and life!

What if a hundred years ago
Those close-shut lips had answered No,
When forth the tremulous question came
That cost the maiden her Norman name,
And under the folds that look so still
The bodice swelled with the bosom's thrill?
Should I be I, or would it be
One-tenth another, to nine-tenths me?

Soft is the breath of a maiden's Yes:
Not the light gossamer stirs with less;
But never a cable that holds so fast
Through all the battles of wave and blast,
And never an echo of speech or song
That lives in the babbling air so long!
There were tones in the voice that whispered then
You may hear to-day in a hundred men.

O lady and lover, how faint and far
Your images hover,—and here we are,
Solid and stirring in flesh and bone,—
Edward's and Dorothy's—all their own,—
A goodly record for Time to show
Of a syllable spoken so long ago!—
Shall I bless you, Dorothy, or forgive
For the tender whisper that bade me live?

It shall be a blessing, my little maid!
I will heal the stab of the Red-Coat's blade,
And freshen the gold of the tarnished frame,
And gild with a rhyme your household name;
So you shall smile on us brave and bright
As first you greeted the morning's light,
And live untroubled by woes and fears
Through a second youth of a hundred years.

(1871)

MY STRAWBERRY*

HELEN HUNT JACKSON

O marvel, fruit of fruits, I pause
To reckon thee. I ask what cause
Set free so much of red from heats
At core of earth, and mixed such sweets
With sour and spice: what was that strength
Which out of darkness, length by length,
Spun all thy shining thread of vine,
Netting the fields in bond as thine.
I see thy tendrils drink by sips
From grass and clover's smiling lips;
I hear thy roots dig down for wells,
Tapping the meadow's hidden cells;
Whole generations of green things,
Descended from long lines of springs,
I see make room for thee to bide
A quiet comrade by their side;
I see the creeping peoples go
Mysterious journeys to and fro,
Treading to right and left of thee,
Doing thee homage wonderingly.

---

[1] Boston.

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I see the wild bees as they fare,
Thy cups of honey drink, but spare.
I mark thee bathe and bathe again
In sweet uncalendared spring rain.
I watch how all May has of sun
Makes haste to have thy ripeness done,
While all her nights let dews escape
To set and cool thy perfect shape.
Ah, fruit of fruits, no more I pause
To dream and seek thy hidden laws!
I stretch my hand and dare to taste,
In instant of delicious waste
On single feast, all things that went
To make the empire thou hast spent.

(1873)

SONG OF PALMS

ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY

[The second half of the original poem is omitted.]

Mighty, luminous, and calm
Is the country of the palm,
Crowned with sunset and sunrise,
Under blue unbroken skies,
Waving from green zone to zone,
Over wonders of its own;
Trackless, untraversed, unknown,
Changeless through the centuries.

Who can say what thing it bears?
Blazing bird and blooming flower,
Dwelling there for years and years,
Hold the enchanted secret theirs:
Life and death and dream have made
Mysteries in many a shade,
Hollow haunt and hidden bower
Closed alike to sun and shower.

Who is ruler of each race
Living in each boundless place,
Growing, flowering, and flying,
Glowing, reveling, and dying?
Wave-like, palm by palm is stirred,
And the bird sings to the bird,
And the day sings one rich word,
And the great night comes replying.

(1874)

ODE

ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY

We are the music-makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams;
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world forever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample a kingdom down.

We, in the ages lying
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself in our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth.

A breath of our inspiration
Is life of each generation;
A wondrous thing of our dreaming,
Unearthly, impossible seeming—
The soldier, the king, and the peasant
Are working together in one,
Till our dream shall become their present,
And their work in the world be done.

They had no vision amazing
Of the goodly house they are raising;
They had no divine foreshowing
Of the land to which they are going;
But on one man's soul it hath broken,
A light that doth not depart;
And his look, or a word he hath spoken,
Wrought flame in another man's heart.

And therefore to-day is thrilling
With a past day's late fulfilling;
And the multitudes are enlisted
In the faith that their fathers resisted,
And, scorning the dream of to-morrow,
Are bringing to pass, as they may,
In the world, for its joy or its sorrow,
The dream that was scorned yesterday.

But we, with our dreaming and singing,
Ceaseless and sorrowless we!
The glory about us clinging
Of the glorious futures we see,
Our souls with high music ringing:
O men! it must ever be
That we dwell, in our dreaming and singing,
A little apart from ye.

For we are afar with the dawning
And the suns that are not yet high,
And out of the infinite morning
Intrepid you hear us cry—
How, spite of your human scorning,
Once more God's future draws nigh,
And already goes forth the warning
That ye of the past must die.

Great hail! we cry to the comers
From the dazzling unknown shore;
Bring us hither your sun and your summers,
And renew our world as of yore;
You shall teach us your song's new numbers;
And things that we dreamed not before:
Yea, in spite of a dreamer who slumbers,
And a singer who sings no more.

(1874)

THE REASON WHY

FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON

Ask why I love the roses fair,
And whence they come and whose they were;
They come from her, and not alone,—
They bring her sweetness with their own.

Or ask me why I love her so;
I know not: this is all I know,
These roses bud and bloom, and twine
As she round this fond heart of mine.

And this is why I love the flowers,
Once they were hers, they're mine—they're ours!
I love her, and they soon will die,
And now you know the Reason Why.

(1874)

NATURE

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
Half willing, half reluctant to be led,
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Nor wholly reassured and comforted
By promises of others in their stead,
Which, though more splendid, may not please him more;
So Nature deals with us, and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends the what we know.

(1875)

A LATE LARK TWITTERS

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

[This poem is sometimes entitled "Margaritæ Sorori" ("To my Sister Margaret"), being thus dedicated in Henley's collected poems.]

A late lark twitters from the quiet skies;
And from the west,
Where the sun, his day's work ended,
Lingers as in content.
There falls on the old, gray city
An influence luminous and serene,
A shining peace.

The smoke ascends
In a rosy-and-golden haze. The spires
Shine, and are changed. In the valley
Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun,
Closing his benediction,
Sinks, and the darkening air
Thrills with a sense of the triumphing night—
Night with her train of stars
And her great gift of sleep.

So be my passing!
My task accomplished and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart
Some late lark singing,
Let me be gathered to the quiet West,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death.

(1876)

TO THE MAN-OF-WAR BIRD*

WALT WHITMAN

[The "frigate-bird," or petrel, is distinguished for its size, swiftness, and endurance—never alighting to rest on the water.]

Thou who hast slept all night upon the storm,
Waking renew'd on thy prodigious pinions
(Burst the wild storm? above it thou ascended'st,
And rested on the sky, thy slave that cradled thee),
Now a blue point, far, far in heaven floating,
As to the light emerging here on deck I watch thee
(Myself a speck, a point on the world's floating vast).

Far, far at sea,
After the night's fierce drifts have strewn the shore with wrecks,
With re-appearing day as now so happy and serene, 10
The rosy and elastic dawn, the flashing sun,
The limpid spread of air cerulean,
Thou also re-appearest.

Thou born to match the gale (thou art all wings),
To cope with heaven and earth and sea and hurricane,
Thou ship of air that never furl'st thy sails,
Days, even weeks untired and onward, through spaces, realms gyrating,
At dusk that look'st on Senegal,[1] at morn America,
That sport'st amid the lightning-flash and thunder-cloud,
In them, in thy experience, had'st thou my soul, 20
What joys! what joys were thine!

(1876)

---

* Reprinted by special arrangement with Doubleday, Page & Co.

[1] *Senegal.* In West Africa.

delicacy of fancy - pretty
favorite

A BALLADE OF DREAMLAND

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

[The Ballade is an old French form, built wholly on three rhyme-sounds, repeated according to the scheme followed in this poem. The "envoi" was originally a concluding address to the poet's prince or patron.]

repetition of rhyme sounds

I hid my heart in a nest of roses,
Out of the sun's way, hidden apart;
In a softer bed than the soft white snow's is,
Under the roses I hid my heart.
Why would it sleep not? why should it start,
When never a leaf of the rose-tree stirred?
What made sleep flutter his wings and part?
Only the song of a secret bird.

Lie still, I said, for the wind's wing closes,
And mild leaves muffle the keen sun's dart; 10
Lie still, for the wind on the warm sea dozes,
And the wind is unquieter yet than thou art.
Does a thought in thee still as a thorn's wound smart?
Does the fang still fret thee of hope deferred?
What bids the lips of thy sleep dispart?
Only the song of a secret bird.

The green land's name that a charm encloses,
It never was writ in the traveller's chart,
And sweet on its trees as the fruit that grows is,
It never was sold in the merchant's mart.
The swallows of dreams through its dim fields dart, 21
And sleep's are the tunes in its tree-tops heard;
No hound's note wakens the wildwood hart,
Only the song of a secret bird.

ENVOI

In the world of dreams I have chosen my part,—
To sleep for a season and hear no word
Of true love's truth or of light love's art,
Only the song of a secret bird.

(1876)

WHEN I SAW YOU LAST, ROSE

AUSTIN DOBSON

[The form of this poem is the old French *villanelle,* based on only two rhyme-sounds, with the first and third lines later repeated thrice as a kind of double refrain.]

When I saw you last, Rose,
  You were only so high;—
How fast the time goes!

Like a bud ere it blows,
  You just peeped at the sky,
When I saw you last, Rose!

Now your petals unclose,
  Now your May-time is nigh;—
How fast the time goes!

And a life,—how it grows!
  You were scarcely so shy
When I saw you last, Rose!

In your bosom it shows
  There's a guest on the sly;
How fast the time goes!

Is it Cupid? Who knows!
  Yet you used not to sigh,
When I saw you last, Rose;—
How fast the time goes!

(1877)

THE TOYS

COVENTRY PATMORE

My little Son, who looked from thoughtful eyes
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
Having my law the seventh time disobeyed,
I struck him, and dismissed
With hard words and unkissed,—
His Mother, who was patient, being dead.
Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,
But found him slumbering deep,
With darkened eyelids, and their lashes yet
From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own;
For, on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-veined stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach,
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells,
And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art,
To comfort his sad heart.
So when that night I prayed
To God, I wept, and said:
Ah, when at last we lie with trancèd breath,
Not vexing Thee in death,
And Thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood
Thy great commanded good,
Then, fatherly not less
Than I whom Thou hast moulded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
"I will be sorry for their childishness."

(1877)

WINTER IN NORTHUMBERLAND

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

[Four stanzas are omitted.]

Outside the garden
The wet skies harden,
The gates are barred on
  The summer side:
"Shut out the flower-time,
Sunbeam and shower-time;
Make way for our time,"
  Wild winds have cried.
Green once and cheery,
The woods, worn weary,
Sigh as the dreary
  Weak sun goes home:
A great wind grapples
The wave, and dapples
The dead green floor of the sea with foam.

Through fell and moorland,
And salt-sea foreland,
Our noisy norland
  Resounds and rings;
Waste waves thereunder
Are blown in sunder
And winds make thunder
  With cloud-wide wings.
Sea-drift makes dimmer
The beacon's glimmer;
Nor sail nor swimmer

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Can try the tides;
And snowdrifts thicken
Where, when leaves quicken,
Under the heather the sundew hides.

Green land and red land,
Moorside and headland,
Are white as dead land,
Are all as one;
Nor honied heather,
Nor bells to gather,
Fair with fair weather
And faithful sun:
Fierce frost has eaten
All flowers that sweeten
The fells rain-beaten;
And winds their foes
Have made the snow's bed
Down in the rose-bed;
Deep in the snow's bed bury the rose.

Bury her deeper
Than any sleeper;
Sweet dreams will keep her
All day, all night;
Though sleep benumb her,
And time o'ercome her,
She dreams of summer,
And takes delight,
Dreaming and sleeping
In love's good keeping,
While rain is weeping
And no leaves cling;
Winds will come bringing her
Comfort, and singing her
Stories and songs and good news of the spring.

Draw the white curtain
Close, and be certain
She takes no hurt in
Her soft low bed;
She feels no colder,
And grows not older,
Though snows enfold her
From foot to head;
She turns not chilly
Like weed and lily
In marsh or hilly
High watershed,
Or green soft island
In lakes of highland;
She sleeps awhile, and she is not dead.

For all the hours,
Come sun, come showers,
Are friends of flowers,
And fairies all;
When frost entrapped her,
They came and lapped her
In leaves, and wrapped her
With shroud and pall;
In red leaves wound her,
With dead leaves bound her
Dead brows, and round her
A death-knell rang;
Rang the death-bell for her,
Sang "Is it well for her,
Well, is it well with you, rose?" they sang.

Each reed that grows in
Our stream is frozen,
The fields it flows in
Are hard and black;
The water-fairy
Waits wise and wary
Till time shall vary
And thaws come back.
"O sister, water,"
The wind besought her,
"O twin-born daughter
Of spring with me,
Stay with me, play with me,
Take the warm way with me,
Straight for the summer and oversea."

But winds will vary,
And wise and wary
The patient fairy
Of water waits;
All shrunk and wizen,
In iron prison,
Till spring re-risen
Unbar the gates;
Till, as with clamor
Of axe and hammer,
Chained streams that stammer
And struggle in straits
Burst bonds that shiver,
And thaws deliver
The roaring river in stormy spates.[1]

As men's cheeks faded
On shores invaded,
When shorewards waded
The lords of fight;
When churl and craven
Saw hard on haven
The wide-winged raven
At mainmast height;
When monks affrighted
To windward sighted
The birds full-flighted

---

[1] *spates.* Freshets.

Of swift sea-kings;[1]
So earth turns paler
When Storm the sailor
Steers in with a roar in the race of his wings.

O strong sea-sailor,
Whose cheeks turn paler
For wind or hail or
For fear of thee?
O far sea-farer,
O thunder-bearer,
Thy songs are rarer
Than soft songs be.
O fleet-foot stranger,
O north-sea ranger
Through days of danger
And ways of fear,
Blow thy horn here for us,
Blow the sky clear for us,
Send us the song of the sea to hear.

O stout north-easter,
Sea-king, land-waster,
For all thine haste or
Thy stormy skill,
Yet hadst thou never,
For all endeavor,
Strength to dissever
Or strength to spill,
Save of his giving
Who gave our living,
Whose hands are weaving
What ours fulfill;
Whose feet tread under
The storms and thunder,
Who made our wonder to work his will.

His years and hours,
His world's blind powers,
His stars and flowers,
His nights and days,
Sea-tide and river,
And waves that shiver,
Praise God, the Giver
Of tongues to praise.
Winds in their blowing,
And fruits in growing,
Time in its going,
While time shall be,
In death and living,
With one thanksgiving,
Praise him whose hand is the strength of the sea.

(1878)

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[1] The Danish invaders of early England.

BALLADE OF DEAD CITIES

EDMUND GOSSE

[For the *ballade* form, see note on page 350. Here the writer has in mind Villon's famous ballade on Dead Ladies, with the refrain, "Where are the snows of yester-year?"]

Where are the cities of the plain?
And where the shrines of rapt Bethel?[1]
And Calah[2] built of Tubal-Cain?
And Shinar[3] whence King Amraphel
Came out in arms, and fought, and fell,
Decoyed into the pits of slime
By Siddim, and sent sheer to hell;
Where are the cities of old time?

Where now is Karnak,[4] that great fane
With granite built, a miracle?
And Luxor smooth without a stain,
Whose graven scriptures still we spell?
The jackal and the owl may tell,
Dark snakes around their ruins climb,
They fade like echo in a shell;
Where are the cities of old time?

And where is white Shusan,[5] again,
Where Vashti's beauty bore the bell,
And all the Jewish oil and grain
Were brought to Mithridath to sell,
Where Nehemiah[6] would not dwell,
Because another town sublime
Decoyed him with her oracle?
Where are the cities of old time?

ENVOY

Prince, with a dolorous, ceaseless knell,
Above their wasted toil and crime
The waters of oblivion swell:
Where are the cities of old time?

(1879)

ULTIMA VERITAS

WASHINGTON GLADDEN

[The title means "Final Truth."]

In the bitter waves of woe,
Beaten and tossed about
By the sullen winds that blow
From the desolate shores of doubt,—

---

[1] *shrines of Bethel.* See 1 *Kings* 12:28-33; 13:1-5.
[2] *Calah.* See *Genesis* 10:11; the poet confuses Tubal-Cain and Nimrod.
[3] *Shinar. . . Siddim.* See *Genesis* 14:1-10.
[4] *Karnak. . . Luxor.* Finely sculptured cities of ancient Egypt.
[5] *Shusan.* See *Esther* 1:5-11.
[6] *Nehemiah.* See *Nehemiah* 1:1; 2:1-5.

While the anchors that faith had cast
  Are dragging in the gale,
I am quietly holding fast
  To the things that cannot fail.

I know that right is right,
  That it is not good to lie;
That love is better than spite,
  And a neighbor than a spy;

I know that passion needs
  The leash of a sober mind;
I know that generous deeds
  Some sure reward will find;

That the rulers must obey;
  That the givers shall increase;
That Duty lights the way
  For the beautiful feet of Peace;—

In the darkest night of the year,
  When the stars have all gone out,
That courage is better than fear,
  That faith is truer than doubt;

And fierce though the fiends may fight,
  And long though the angels hide,
I know that Truth and Right
  Have the universe on their side;

And that somewhere, beyond the stars,
  Is a Love that is better than fate;
When the night unlocks her bars
  I shall see Him, and I will wait.

(1879)

American Poetry

THE MARSHES OF GLYNN

SIDNEY LANIER

[illegible]

Glooms of the live-oaks, beautiful-braided and woven
With intricate shades of the vines that myriad-cloven
  Clamber the forks of the multiform boughs,—
    Emerald twilight,—
    Virginal shy lights,
Wrought of the leaves to allure to the whisper of vows,
When lovers pace timidly down through the green colonnades
Of the dim sweet woods, of the dear dark woods,
  Of the heavenly woods and glades,
That run to the radiant marginal sand-beach within
  The wide sea-marshes of Glynn;—

Beautiful glooms, soft dusks in the noon-day fire,—
Wildwood privacies, closets of lone desire,
Chamber from chamber parted with wavering arras of leaves,—
Cells for the passionate pleasure of prayer to the soul that grieves,
Pure with a sense of the passing of saints through the wood,
Cool for the dutiful weighing of ill with good;—

O braided dusks of the oak and woven shades of the vine,
While the riotous noon-day sun of the June-day long did shine
Ye held me fast in your heart and I held you fast in mine;
But now when the noon is no more, and riot is rest,
And the sun is a-wait at the ponderous gate of the West,
And the slant yellow beam down the wood-aisle doth seem
Like a lane into heaven that leads from a dream,—
Ay, now, when my soul all day hath drunken the soul of the oak,
And my heart is at ease from men, and the wearisome sound of the stroke
  Of the scythe of time and the trowel of trade is low,
  And belief overmasters doubt, and I know that I know,
  And my spirit is grown to a lordly great compass within,
That the length and the breadth and the sweep of the Marshes of Glynn
Will work me no fear like the fear they have wrought me of yore
When length was fatigue, and when breadth was but bitterness sore,
And when terror and shrinking and dreary unnamable pain
Drew over me out of the merciless miles of the plain,—

Oh, now, unafraid, I am fain[1] to face
  The vast sweet visage of space.
To the edge of the wood I am drawn, I am drawn,
Where the gray beach glimmering runs, as a belt of the dawn,
  For a mete and a mark
    To the forest-dark:—

---

[1] *fain.* Glad.

So:
Affable live-oak, leaning low,—
Thus—with your favor—soft, with a reverent hand
(Not lightly touching your person, lord of the land!),
Bending your beauty aside, with a step I stand
On the firm-packed sand,
Free
By a world of marsh that borders a world of sea.
Sinuous southward and sinuous northward the shimmering band
Of the sand-beach fastens the fringe of the marsh to the folds of the land.
Inward and outward to northward and southward the beach-lines linger and curl
As a silver-wrought garment that clings to and follows the firm sweet limbs of a girl.
Vanishing, swerving, evermore curving again into sight,
Softly the sand-beach wavers away to a dim gray looping of light.
And what if behind me to westward the wall of the woods stands high?
The world lies east: how ample, the marsh and the sea and the sky!
A league and a league of marsh-grass, waist-high, broad in the blade,
Green, and all of a height, and unflecked with a light or a shade,
Stretch leisurely off, in a pleasant plain,
To the terminal blue of the main.

Oh, what is abroad in the marsh and the terminal sea?
Somehow my soul seems suddenly free
From the weighing of fate and the sad discussion of sin,
By the length and the breadth and the sweep of the marshes of Glynn.

life could be this way

Ye marshes, how candid and simple and nothing-withholding and free
Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer yourselves to the sea!
Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the rains and the sun,
Ye spread and span like a catholic man who hath mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain
And sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain.

appreciation

Nature seen through light

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God:
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn.

interpretive imag.

Think of God's greatness as the marshes —

And the sea lends large, as the marsh: lo, out of his plenty the sea
Pours fast: full soon the time of the flood-tide must be:
Look how the grace of the sea doth go,
About and about through the intricate channels that flow
Here and there,
Everywhere,
Till his waters have flooded the uttermost creeks and the low-lying lanes,
And the marsh is meshed with a million veins,
That like as with rosy and silvery essences flow
In the rose-and-silver evening glow.
Farewell, my lord Sun!
The creeks overflow; a thousand rivulets run
'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of the marsh-grass stir;
Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that westward whirr;
Passeth, and all is still; and the currents cease to run;
And the sea and the marsh are one.

How still the plains of the waters be!
The tide is in his ecstasy.—
The tide is at his highest height:
And it is night.

interpretative

And now from the Vast of the Lord will the waters of sleep
Roll in on the souls of men,
But who will reveal to our waking ken
The forms that swim and the shapes that creep
Under the waters of sleep?

And I would I could know what swimmeth below when the tide comes in
On the length and the breadth of the marvellous marshes of Glynn.

(1879)

LONDON SNOW

ROBERT BRIDGES

When men were all asleep the snow came flying,
In large white flakes falling on the city brown,
Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,
Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town;
Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing;
Lazily and incessantly floating down and down:
Silently sifting and veiling road, roof, and railing;
Hiding difference, making unevenness even,
Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.
All night it fell, and when full inches seven
It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,
The clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven;
And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness
Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare:
The eye marvelled — marvelled at the dazzling whiteness;
The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air;
No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,
And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.
Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling;
They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze
Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snowballing;
Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees;
Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,
"O look at the trees!" they cried, "O look at the trees!"
With lessened load a few carts creak and blunder,
Following along the white deserted way,
A country company long dispersed asunder:
When now already the sun, in pale display
Standing by Paul's[1] high dome, spread forth below
His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day.
For now doors open, and war is waged with the snow;
And trains of sombre men, past tale of number,
Tread long brown paths, as toward their toil they go:
But even for them awhile no cares encumber
Their minds diverted; the daily word is unspoken,
The daily thoughts of labor and sorrow slumber
At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the charm they have broken.

(1880)

O YOUTH WHOSE HOPE IS HIGH

ROBERT BRIDGES

O youth whose hope is high,
Who dost to Truth aspire,
Whether thou live or die,
O look not back nor tire.

Thou that art bold to fly
Through tempest, flood, and fire,
Nor dost not shrink to try
Thy heart in torments dire:

If thou canst Death defy,
If thy Faith is entire,
Press onward, for thine eye
Shall see thy heart's desire.

Beauty and love are nigh,
And with their deathless choir
Soon shall thine eager cry
Be numbered and expire.

(1880)

---

[1] *Paul's.* St. Paul's Cathedral.

A BALLAD OF TREES AND THE MASTER

SIDNEY LANIER

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him:
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods He came.

Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him last,
From under the trees they drew Him last:
'Twas on a tree they slew Him—last
When out of the woods he came.

(1881)

A SONG OF TO-DAY

MARY A. LATHBURY

Sing pæans over the Past!
We bury the dead years tenderly,
To find them again in eternity;
All safe in its circle vast,
Sing pæans over the Past!

Farewell, farewell to the old!
Beneath the arches, and one by one,
From sun to shade, and from shade to sun,
We pass, and the years are told;
Farewell, farewell to the old!

And hail, all hail to the new!
The future lies like a world new-born,
All steeped in sunshine and mists of morn,
And arched with a cloudless blue:
All hail, all hail to the new!

All things, all things are yours!
The spoil of nations, the arts sublime
That arch the ages from eldest time,
The Word that for aye endures;
All things, all things are yours!

Arise, and conquer the land!
Not one shall fail in the march of life,
Not one shall fall in the hour of strife,
Who trusts in the Lord's right hand.
Arise, and conquer the land!

The Lord shall sever the sea!
And open a way in the wilderness,
To faith that follows, to feet that press
On into the great To-Be:
The Lord shall sever the sea!

(1882)

"HOLLOW-SOUNDING AND MYSTERIOUS"

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

There's no replying
To the Wind's sighing;
Telling, foretelling,
Dying, undying,
Dwindling and swelling,
Complaining, droning,
Whistling and moaning,
Ever beginning,
Ending, repeating,
Hinting and dinning,
Lagging and fleeting;—
We've no replying
Living or dying
To the Wind's sighing.

What are you telling,
Variable Wind-tone?
What would be teaching,
O sinking, swelling,
Desolate Wind-moan?
Ever for ever
Teaching and preaching,
Never, ah never
Making us wiser.
The earliest riser
Catches no meaning,
The last who harkens
Garners no gleaning
Of wisdom's treasure,
While the world darkens.
Living or dying,
In pain, in pleasure,
We've no replying
To wordless, flying
Wind's sighing.

(1882)

THE WAY TO ARCADY

HENRY CUYLER BUNNER

Oh, what's the way to Arcady,
To Arcady, to Arcady;
Oh, what's the way to Arcady,
Where all the leaves are merry?

Oh, what's the way to Arcady?
The spring is rustling in the tree,—
The tree the wind is blowing through,—
It sets the blossoms flickering white.
I knew not skies could burn so blue
Nor any breezes blow so light.
They blow an old-time way for me,
Across the world to Arcady.

Oh, what's the way to Arcady?
Sir Poet, with the rusty coat,
Quit mocking of the song-bird's note.
How have you heart for any tune,
You with the wayworn russet shoon?
Your scrip, a-swinging by your side,
Gapes with a gaunt mouth hungry-wide.
I'll brim it well with pieces red,
If you will tell the way to tread.

Oh, I am bound for Arcady,
And if you but keep pace with me
You tread the way to Arcady.

And where away lies Arcady,
And how long yet may the journey be?

Ah, that (quoth he) *I do not know:*
Across the clover and the snow—
Across the frost, across the flowers—
Through summer seconds and winter hours,
I've trod the way my whole life long,
And know not now where it may be;
My guide is but the stir to song,
That tells me I cannot go wrong,
Or clear or dark the pathway be
Upon the road to Arcady.

But how shall I do who cannot sing?
I was wont to sing, once on a time,—
There is never an echo now to ring
Remembrance back to the trick of rhyme.

'Tis strange you cannot sing (quoth he),
The folk all sing in Arcady.

But how may he find Arcady
Who hath nor youth nor melody?

What, know you not, old man (quoth he),—
Your hair is white, your face is wise,—
That Love must kiss that mortal's eyes
Who hopes to see fair Arcady?
No gold can buy you entrance there;
But beggared Love may go all bare—
No wisdom won with weariness;
But Love goes in with Folly's dress—
No fame that wit could ever win;
But only Love may lead Love in
To Arcady, to Arcady.

Ah, woe is me, through all my days
Wisdom and wealth I both have got,
And fame and name, and great men's praise;
But Love, ah Love! I have it not.
There was a time, when life was new—
But far away, and half forgot—
I only know her eyes were blue;
But Love—I fear I knew it not.
We did not wed, for lack of gold,
And she is dead, and I am old.
All things have come since then to me,
Save Love, ah Love! and Arcady.

Ah, then I fear we part (quoth he),—
My way's for Love and Arcady.

But you, you fare alone, like me;
The gray is likewise in your hair,
What love have you to lead you there,
To Arcady, to Arcady?

Ah, no, not lonely do I fare;
My true companion's Memory.
With love he fills the Spring-time air;
With Love he clothes the Winter tree.
Oh, past this poor horizon's bound
My song goes straight to one who stands,—
Her face all gladdening at the sound,—
To lead me to the Spring-green lands,
To wander with enlacing hands.

The songs within my breast that stir
Are all of her, are all of her.
My maid is dead long years (quoth he),—
She waits for me in Arcady.

Oh, yon's the way to Arcady,
To Arcady, to Arcady;
Oh, yon's the way to Arcady,
Where all the leaves are merry.

(1884)

THE MILKMAID

AUSTIN DOBSON

Across the grass I see her pass;
She comes with tripping pace,—
A maid I know,—and March winds blow
Her hair across her face;—
With a hey, Dolly! ho, Dolly!
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

The March winds blow. I watch her go:
Her eye is brown and clear;
Her cheek is brown, and soft as down,
(To those who see it near!)—
With a hey, Dolly! ho, Dolly!
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

What has she not that those have got,—
The dames that walk in silk!
If she undo her 'kerchief blue
Her neck is white as milk.
With a hey, Dolly! ho, Dolly!
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

Let those who will be proud and chill!
For me, from June to June,
My Dolly's words are sweet as curds—
Her laugh is like a tune;—
With a hey, Dolly! ho, Dolly!
Dolly shall be mine,
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

Break, break to her, O crocus-spear!
O tall Lent-lilies flame!
There'll be a bride at Easter-tide,
And Dolly is her name.
With a hey, Dolly! ho, Dolly!
Dolly shall be mine
Before the spray is white with May,
Or blooms the eglantine.

(1885)

Contrast with Swinburne -

BALLADE OF JUNE

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

[For the form of this poem, see the note on page 350.]

Lilacs glow, and jasmines climb,
Larks are loud the livelong day.
O the golden summer-prime!
June takes up the sceptre of May,
And the land beneath her sway
Glows, a dream of blossoming closes,
And the very wind's at play
With Sir Love among the roses.

Lights and shadows in the lime
Meet in exquisite disarray.
Hark! the rich recurrent rhyme
Of the blackbird's roundelay!
Where he carols, frank and gay,
Fancy no more glooms or proses;
Joyously she trips away
With Sir Love among the roses.

O the cool sea's slumbrous chime!
O the links that beach the bay,
Paven with meadow-sweet and thyme,
Where the brown bees murmur and stray!
Lush the hedgerows, ripe the hay!
Many a maiden, binding posies,
Finds herself at Yea-and-Nay
With Sir Love among the roses.

ENVOY

Boys and girls, be wise, I pray!
Do as dear Queen June proposes,
For she bids you troop and stay
With Sir Love among the roses.

(1887)

REQUIEM

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be,
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

(1887)

MARCH

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

[The whole poem contains seven stanzas, of which these are the first, fourth, and last.]

Ere frost-flower and snow-blossom faded and fell, and the splendor of winter had passed out of sight,
The ways of the woodlands were fairer and stranger than dreams that fulfil us in sleep with delight;
The breath of the mouths of the winds had hardened on tree-tops and branches that glittered and swayed
Such wonders and glories of blossom-like snow, or of frost that outlightens all flowers till it fade,
That the sea was not lovelier than here was the land, nor the night than the day, nor the day than the night,
Nor the winter sublimer with storm than the spring; such mirth had the madness and might in thee made,
March, master of winds, bright minstrel and marshal of storms that enkindle the season they smite.

As the sunshine quenches the snowshine; as April subdues thee, and yields up his kingdom to May,
So time overcomes the regret that is born of delight as it passes in passion away,
And leaves but a dream for desire to rejoice in or mourn for with tears and thanksgivings; but thou,
Bright god that art gone from us, maddest and gladdest of months, to what goal hast thou gone from us now?
For somewhere surely the storm of thy laughter that lightens, the beat of thy wings that play,
Must flame as a fire through the world, and the heavens that we know not rejoice in thee: surely thy brow
Hath lost not its radiance of empire, thy spirit the joy that impelled it on quest as for prey.

Thy spirit is quenched not, albeit we behold not thy face in the crown of the steep sky's arch,
And the bold first buds of the whin wax golden, and witness arise of the thorn and the larch:
Wild April, enkindled to laughter and storm by the kiss of the wildest of winds that blow,
Calls loud on his brother for witness; his hands that were laden with blossom are sprinkled with snow,
And his lips breathe winter, and laugh, and relent; and the live woods feel not the frost's flame parch;
For the flame of the spring that consumes not but quickens is felt at the heart of the forest aglow,
And the sparks that enkindled and fed it were strewn from the hands of the gods of the winds of March.

(1887)

ENGLAND, QUEEN OF THE WAVES

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

[The closing poem in a series called "The Armada," written in celebration of the 300th anniversary of the destruction of the Spanish Armada.]

England, queen of the waves whose green inviolate girdle enrings thee round,
Mother fair as the morning, where is now the place of thy foemen found?
Still the sea that salutes us free proclaims them stricken, acclaims thee crowned.

Times may change, and the skies grow strange with signs of treason and fraud and fear:
Foes in union of strange communion may rise against thee from far and near:
Sloth and greed on thy strength may feed as cankers waxing from year to year.

Yet, though treason and fierce unreason should league and lie and defame and smite,
We that know thee, how far below thee the hatred burns of the sons of night,
We that love thee behold above thee the witness written of life in light.

Life that shines from thee shows forth signs that none may read not but eyeless foes:
Hate, born blind, in his abject mind grows hopeful now but as madness grows:
Love, born wise, with exultant eyes adores thy glory, beholds and glows.

Truth is in thee, and none may win thee to lie, forsaking the face of truth:
Freedom lives by the grace she gives thee, born again from thy deathless youth:
Faith should fail, and the world turn pale, wert thou the prey of the serpent's tooth.

Greed and fraud, unabashed, unawed, may strive to sting thee at heel in vain:
Craft and fear and mistrust may leer and mourn and murmur and plead and plain;
Thou art thou: and thy sunbright brow is hers that blasted the strength of Spain.

Mother, mother beloved, none other could claim in place of thee England's place:
Earth bears none that beholds the sun so pure of record, so clothed with grace:
Dear our mother, nor son nor brother is thine, as strong or as fair of face.

How shalt thou be abased? or how shall fear take hold of thy heart? of thine,
England, maiden immortal, laden with charge of life and with hopes divine?
Earth shall wither, when eyes turned hither behold not light in her darkness shine.

England, none that is born thy son, and lives, by grace of thy glory, free,
Lives and yearns not at heart and burns with hope to serve as he worships thee;
None may sing thee: the sea-wind's wing beats down our songs as it hails the sea.

(1888)

BY AN EVOLUTIONIST

ALFRED TENNYSON

[Note these divisions in the poem: the opening stanza, in which the poet imaginatively states the whole subject of the relation of man's body and soul; the four numbered stanzas, giving the two speeches of the Evolutionist; and the reply of Old Age to the first of these speeches.]

The Lord let the house of a brute to the soul of a man,
And the man said, "Am I your debtor?"
And the Lord—"Not yet: but make it as clean as you can,
And then I will let you a better."

I

If my body come from brutes, my soul uncertain or a fable,
Why not bask amid the senses while the sun of morning shines,
I, the finer brute rejoicing in my hounds, and in my stable,
Youth and health, and birth and wealth, and choice of women and of wines?

II

What hast thou done for me, grim Old Age, save breaking my bones on the rack?
Would I had pass'd in the morning that looks so bright from afar!

Old Age

Done for thee? starved the wild beast that was link'd with thee eighty years back.
Less weight now for the ladder-of-heaven that hangs on a star.

I

If my body come from brutes, tho' somewhat finer than their own,
I am heir, and this my kingdom. Shall the royal voice be mute?
No, but if the rebel subject seek to drag me from the throne,
Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and rule thy province of the brute.

II

I have climb'd to the snows of Age, and I gaze at a field in the Past,
Where I sank with the body at times in the sloughs of a low desire,
But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the Man is quiet at last
As he stands on the heights of his life with a glimpse of a height that is higher.

(1889)

EPILOGUE

ROBERT BROWNING

[This poem, in which Browning contemplates the time when he shall be dead, was actually published on the day of his death, as the closing poem in his final volume called *Asolando.*]

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where—by death, fools think, imprisoned—
Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
—Pity me?

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel
—Being—who?

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed,[1] though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed,—fight on, fare ever
There as here!"

(1889)

CROSSING THE BAR

ALFRED TENNYSON

[By Tennyson's direction, this poem is always printed at the conclusion of his collected works.]

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

(1889)

---

[1] *dreamed.* Supply "that" after this word, and again after "Held" in the following line.

WHEN BURBAGE PLAYED

AUSTIN DOBSON

[Burbage was the leading tragic actor of Shakespeare's company, who first played Hamlet. The form of this poem is the old French *rondeau,* based on a refrain twice repeated from the opening phrase.]

When Burbage played, the stage was bare
Of fount and temple, tower and stair;
  Two backswords eked a battle out;
  Two supers made a rabble rout;
The Throne of Denmark was a chair!

And yet, no less, the audience there
Thrilled through all changes of Despair,
  Hope, Anger, Fear, Delight, and Doubt,
    When Burbage played!

This is the actor's gift: to share
All moods, all passions, nor to care
  One whit for scene, so he without
  Can lead men's minds the roundabout,
Stirred as of old those hearers were
    When Burbage played!

(1889)

IF

EMILY DICKINSON

If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.

(1890)

A DAY*

EMILY DICKINSON

I'll tell you how the sun rose,—
A ribbon at a time.
The steeples swam in amethyst,
The news like squirrels ran.

The hills untied their bonnets,
The bobolinks begun.
Then I said softly to myself,
"That must have been the sun!"
But how he set, I know not.
There seemed a purple stile
Which little yellow boys and girls
Were climbing all the while,

Till when they reached the other side,
A dominie in gray
Put gently up the evening bars,
And led the flock away.

(1890)

I NEVER SAW A MOOR*

EMILY DICKINSON

I never saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet know I how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

(1890)

THE RAILWAY TRAIN*

EMILY DICKINSON

I like to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks;
And then, prodigious, step

Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads;
And then a quarry pare

To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;
Then chase itself down hill

And neigh like Boanerges;[1]
Then, punctual as a star,
Stop—docile and omnipotent—
At its own stable door.

(1891)

---

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[1] *Boanerges.* The Sons of Thunder; see *Mark* 3:17.

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THE ROBIN*

EMILY DICKINSON

The robin is the one
That interrupts the morn
With hurried, few, express reports
When March is scarcely on.

The robin is the one
That overflows the noon
With her cherubic quantity,
An April but begun.

The robin is the one
That speechless from her nest
Submits that home and certainty
And sanctity are best.

(1891)

WHO ROBBED THE WOODS?*

EMILY DICKINSON

Who robbed the woods,
The trusting woods?
The unsuspecting trees
Brought out their burrs and mosses
His fantasy to please.
He scanned their trinkets, curious,
He grasped, he bore away.
What will the solemn hemlock,
What will the fir-tree say?

(1891)

TWO VOYAGERS*

EMILY DICKINSON

Two butterflies went out at noon
And waltzed above a stream,
Then stepped straight through the firmament
And rested on a beam;

And then together bore away
Upon a shining sea,—
Though never yet, in any port,
Their coming mentioned be.

If spoken by the distant bird,
If met in ether sea
By frigate or by merchantman,
Report was not to me.

(1891)

THE ENGLISH FLAG

RUDYARD KIPLING

[In this poem Kipling celebrated English imperialism at a time when he felt it was little understood by the English themselves. Four omitted lines (after the second) have to do with temporary political conditions.]

Winds of the World, give answer! They are whimpering to and fro—
And what should they know of England who only England know?—

* * * *

We may not speak of England; her flag's to sell or share.
What is the Flag of England? Winds of the world, declare!

The North Wind blew: "From Bergen my steel-shod vanguards go;
I chase your lazy whalers home from the Disko floe.[1]
By the great North Lights above me I work the will of God,
And the liner splits on the ice-fields, or the Dogger[2] fills with cod.

"I barred my gates with iron, I shuttered my doors with flame,
Because to force my ramparts your nutshell navies came.
I took the sun from their presence, I cut them down with my blast,
And they died, but the Flag of England blew free ere the spirit passed.

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[1] *Disko floe.* Ice-drift from Greenland.

[2] *Dogger.* A fishing bank in the North Sea.

"The lean white bear hath seen it in the long, long Arctic night,
The musk-ox knows the standard that flouts the Northern Light:
What is the Flag of England? Ye have but my bergs to dare,
Ye have but my drifts to conquer. Go forth, for it is there!"

The South Wind sighed: "From the Virgins[1] my mid-sea course was ta'en
Over a thousand islands lost in an idle main,
Where the sea-egg flames on the coral and the long-backed breakers croon
Their endless ocean legends to the lazy, locked lagoon.

"Strayed amid lonely islets, mazed amid outer keys,
I waked the palms to laughter—I tossed the scud in the breeze.
Never was isle so little, never was sea so lone,
But over the scud and the palm-trees an English flag was flown.

"I have wrenched it free from the halliards to hang for a wisp on the Horn;
I have chased it north to the Lizard,[2] ribboned and rolled and torn;
I have spread its fold o'er the dying, adrift in a hopeless sea;
I have hurled it swift on the slaver, and seen the slave set free.

"My basking sunfish know it, and wheeling albatross,
Where the lone wave fills with fire beneath the Southern Cross.
What is the Flag of England? Ye have but my reefs to dare,
Ye have but my seas to furrow. Go forth, for it is there!"

The East Wind roared: "From the Kuriles,[3] the Bitter Seas, I come,
And me men call the Home-Wind, for I bring the English home.
Look—look well to your shipping! By the breath of my mad typhoon
I swept your close-packed Praya,[4] and beached your best at Kowloon![5]

"The reeling junks behind me, and the racing seas before,
I raped your richest roadstead—I plundered Singapore!
I set my hand on the Hoogli;[6] as a hooded snake she rose;
And I flung your stoutest steamers to roost with the startled crows.

"Never the lotos closes, never the wild-fowl wake,
But a soul goes out on the East Wind that died for England's sake—
Man or woman or suckling, mother or bride or maid—
Because on the bones of the English the English Flag is stayed.

"The desert-dust hath dimmed it, the flying wild-ass knows,
The scared white leopard winds it across the taintless snows.
What is the Flag of England? Ye have but my sun to dare,
Ye have but my sands to travel. Go forth, for it is there!"

The West Wind called: "In squadrons the thoughtless galleons fly
That bear the wheat and cattle lest street-bred people die.
They make my might their porter, they make my house their path,
And I loose my neck from their service and whelm them all in my wrath.

"I draw the gliding fog-bank as a snake is drawn from the hole;
They bellow one to the other, the frighted ship-bells toll:
For day is a drifting terror till I raise the shroud with my breath,
And they see strange bows above them, and the two go locked to death.

[1] *Virgins.* Islands of the West Indies.
[2] *Lizard.* The headland first sighted by ships approaching England from the south.
[3] *Kuriles.* Islands northeast of Japan. [4] *Praya.* An embankment.
[5] *Kowloon.* Near Hong Kong.
[6] *Hoogli.* The chief branch in the delta of the River Ganges.

"But whether in calm or wrack-wreath, whether by dark or day
I heave them whole to the conger[1] or rip their plates away,
First of the scattered legions, under a shrieking sky,
Dipping between the rollers, the English Flag goes by.

"The dead dumb fog hath wrapped it—the frozen dews have kissed—
The morning stars have hailed it, a fellow-star in the mist.
What is the Flag of England? Ye have but my breath to dare,
Ye have but my waves to conquer. Go forth, for it is there!"

(1891)

FRESH FROM HIS FASTNESSES

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

Fresh from his fastnesses
Wholesome and spacious,
The North Wind, the mad huntsman,
Halloas on his white hounds
Over the gray, roaring
Reaches and ridges,
The forest of ocean,
The chace[2] of the world.
Hark to the peal
Of the pack in full cry,
As he thongs them before him,
Swarming voluminous,
Weltering, wide-wallowing,
Till in a ruining
Chaos of energy,
Hurled on their quarry,
They crash into foam!

Old Indefatigable,
Time's right-hand man, the sea
Laughs as in joy
From his millions of wrinkles:
Laughs that his destiny,
Great with the greatness
Of triumphing order,
Shows as a dwarf
By the strength of his heart
And the might of his hands.

Master of masters,
O maker of heroes,
Thunder the brave,
Irresistible message:—
"Life is worth Living
Through every grain of it,
From the foundations
To the last edge
Of the cornerstone, death."

(1892)

UNGUARDED GATES

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

[With this poetic plea for the restriction of immigration to the United States, compare the opposite side as represented in Mr. Schauffler's poem, page 386.]

Wide open and unguarded stand our gates,
Named of the four winds, North, South, East, and West;
Portals that lead to an enchanted land
Of cities, forests, fields of living gold,
Vast prairies, lordly summits touched with snow,
Majestic rivers sweeping proudly past
The Arab's date-palm and the Norseman's pine—
A realm wherein are fruits of every zone,
Airs of all climes, for lo! throughout the year
The red rose blossoms somewhere—a rich land,
A later Eden planted in the wilds,
With not an inch of earth within its bound
But if a slave's foot press it sets him free.
Here, it is written, Toil shall have its wage,
And Honor honor, and the humblest man
Stand level with the highest in the law.
Of such a land have men in dungeons dreamed,
And, with the vision brightening in their eyes,
Gone smiling to the fagot and the sword.

Wide open and unguarded stand our gates,
And through them presses a wild motley throng—
Men from the Volga and the Tartar steppes,
Featureless figures of the Hoang-ho,

---

[1] *conger.* Sea-eel.
[2] *chace.* Hunting reservation.

Malayan, Scythian, Teuton, Kelt, and Slav,
Flying the Old World's poverty and scorn;
These bringing with them unknown gods and rites,—
Those, tiger passions, here to stretch their claws.
In street and alley what strange tongues are loud,
Accents of menace alien to our air,
Voices that once the Tower of Babel knew!

O Liberty, white Goddess! is it well
To leave the gates unguarded? On thy breast
Fold Sorrow's children, soothe the hurts of fate,
Lift the down-trodden, but with hand of steel
Stay those who to thy sacred portals come
To waste the gifts of freedom. Have a care
Lest from thy brow the clustered stars be torn
And trampled in the dust. For so of old
The thronging Goth and Vandal trampled Rome,
And where the temples of the Cæsars stood
The lean wolf unmolested made her lair.

(1892)

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles[1] made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnets' wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

(1892)

THE REDBIRD*

MADISON CAWEIN

He flies with flirt and fluting—
As flies a crimson star
From flaming star-beds shooting—
From where the roses are.

Wings past and sings; and seven
Notes, wild as fragrance is,—
That turn to flame in heaven,—
Float round him full of bliss.

He sings; each burning feather
Thrills, throbbing at his throat;
A song of firefly weather,
And of a glow-worm boat:

Of Elfland and a princess
Who, born of a perfume,
His music rocks,—where winces
That rosebud's cradled bloom.

No bird sings half so airy,
No bird of dusk or dawn,
Thou masking King of Faery!
Thou red-crowned Oberon!

(1893)

"A MAN MUST LIVE"

CHARLOTTE PERKINS STETSON

[For the rondeau form of this poem, see note on Dobson's "When Burbage Played," page 363.]

A man must live! We justify
Low shift and trick to treason high,
A little vote for a little gold,
To a whole senate bought and sold,
With this self-evident reply.

---

[1] *wattles.* Woven twigs.

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But is it so? Pray tell me why
Life at such cost you have to buy?
In what religion were you told
"A man must live"?

There are times when a man must die.
Imagine for a battle-cry
From soldiers with a sword to hold—
From soldiers with the flag unrolled—
This coward's whine, this liar's lie,
"A man must live"!

(1893)

HISTORY

WILLIAM WATSON

Darkly, as by some gloomèd mirror glassed,
Herein at times the brooding eye beholds
The great scarred visage of the pompous Past,
But oftener only the embroidered folds
And soiled regality of his rent robe,
Whose tattered skirts are ruined dynasties
And cumber with their trailing pride the globe,
And sweep the dusty ages in our eyes;
Till the world seems a world of husks and bones
Where sightless seers and immortals dead,
Kings that remember not their awful thrones,
Invincible armies long since vanquishèd,
And powerless potentates and foolish sages
Lie 'mid the crumbling of the mossy ages.

(1893)

SCHOOL-DAYS

ROBERT BRIDGES

[From "Founder's Day," an ode written for the ninth Jubilee of Eton, the chief English school for boys.]

Here is eternal spring: for you
The very stars of heaven are new;
And aged Fame again is born,
Fresh as a peeping flower of morn.

For you shall Shakespeare's scene unroll,
Mozart shall steal your ravished soul,
Homer his bardic hymn rehearse,
Virgil recite his maiden verse.

Now learn, love, have, do, be the best;
Each in one thing excel the rest:
Strive; and hold fast this truth of heaven—
To him that hath shall more be given.

(1893)

COMRADES*

RICHARD HOVEY

[From a poem read at the 60th convention of the Psi Upsilon fraternity.]

Comrades, pour the wine to-night,
For the parting is with dawn.
Oh, the clink of cups together,
With the daylight coming on!
Greet the morn
With a double horn,
When strong men drink together!

Comrades, gird your swords to-night,
For the battle is with dawn.
Oh, the clash of shields together,
With the triumph coming on!
Greet the foe
And lay him low
When strong men fight together.

Comrades, watch the tides to-night,
For the sailing is with dawn.
Oh, to face the spray together,
With the tempest coming on!
Greet the Sea
With a shout of glee
When strong men roam together.

Comrades, give a cheer to-night,
For the dying is with dawn.
Oh, to meet the stars together,
With the silence coming on!
Greet the end
As a friend a friend,
When strong men die together.

(1894)

---

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THE MARCHING MORROWS*

BLISS CARMAN

Now gird thee well for courage,
My knight of twenty year,
Against the marching morrows
That fill the world with fear!

The flowers fade before them;
The summer leaves the hill;
Their trumpets range the morning,
And those who hear grow still.

Like pillagers of harvest,
Their fame is far abroad,
As gray remorseless troopers
That plunder and maraud.

The dust is on their corselets;
Their marching fills the world;
With conquest after conquest
Their banners are unfurled.

They overthrow the battles
Of every lord of war,
From world-dominioned cities
Wipe out the names they bore.

Sohrab, Rameses, Roland,
Ramoth, Napoleon, Tyre,
And the Romeward Huns of Attila—
Alas, for their desire!

By April and by autumn
They perish in their pride,
And still they close and gather
Out on the mountain-side.

The tanned and tameless children
Of the wild elder earth,
With stature of the northlights,
They have the stars for girth.

There's not a hand to stay them,
Of all the hearts that brave;
No captain to undo them,
No cunning to off-stave.

Yet fear thou not! If haply
Thou be the kingly one,
They'll set thee in their vanguard
To lead them round the sun.

(1894)

---

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A MORE ANCIENT MARINER†

BLISS CARMAN

[Six stanzas of the original poem—following the sixth—are omitted.]

The swarthy bee is a buccaneer,
A burly velveted rover,
Who loves the booming wind in his ear
As he sails the seas of clover.

A waif of the goblin pirate crew,
With not a soul to deplore him,
He steers for the open verge of blue
With the filmy world before him.

His flimsy sails abroad on the wind
Are shivered with fairy thunder;
On a line that sings to the light of his wings
He makes for the lands of wonder.

He harries the ports of the Hollyhocks,
And levies on poor Sweetbrier;
He drinks the whitest wine of Phlox,
And the Rose is his desire.

He hangs in the Willows a night and a day;
He rifles the Buckwheat patches;
Then battens his store of pelf galore
Under the tautest hatches.

He woos the Poppy and weds the Peach,
Inveigles Daffodilly,
And then like a tramp abandons each
For the gorgeous Canada Lily.

He never could box the compass round;
He doesn't know port from starboard;
But he knows the gates of the Sundown Straits,
Where the choicest goods are harbored.

He never could see the Rule of Three,
But he knows a rule of thumb
Better than Euclid's, better than yours,
Or the teachers' yet to come.

He knows the smell of the hydromel
As if two and two were five;
And hides it away for a year and a day
In his own hexagonal hive.

Out in the day, haphazard, alone,
Booms the old vagrant hummer,
With only his whim to pilot him
Through the splendid vast of summer.

---

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He steers and steers on the slant of the gale,
Like the fiend or Vanderdecken;[1]
And there's never an unknown course to sail
But his crazy log can reckon.

He drones along with his rough sea-song
And the throat of a salty tar,
This devil-may-care, till he makes his lair
By the light of a yellow star.

He looks like a gentleman, lives like a lord,
And works like a Trojan hero;
Then loafs all winter upon his hoard,
With the mercury at zero.

(1894)

THE BUTTERFLY*

JOHN B. TABB

Leafless, stemless, floating flower,
From a rainbow's scattered bower,
Like a bubble of the air
Blown by fairies, tell me where
Seed or scion I may find
Bearing blossoms of thy kind.

(1894)

THE BROOK*

JOHN B. TABB

It is the mountain to the sea
That makes a messenger of me:
And, lest I loiter on the way
And lose what I am sent to say,
He sets his reverie to song
And bids me sing it all day long.
Farewell! for here the stream is slow,
And I have many a mile to go.

(1894)

THE WATER-LILY†

JOHN B. TABB

Whence, O fragrant form of light,
Hast thou drifted through the night,
Swanlike, to a leafy nest,
On the restless waves at rest?

Art thou from the snowy zone
Of a mountain-summit blown,
Or the blossom of a dream,
Fashioned in the foamy stream?

Nay; methinks the maiden moon,
When the daylight came too soon,
Fleeting from her bath to hide,
Left her garment in the tide.

(1894)

PHANTOMS†

JOHN B. TABB

Are ye the ghosts of fallen leaves,
O flakes of snow,
For which, through naked trees, the winds
A-mourning go?

Or are ye angels, bearing home
The host unseen
Of truant spirits, to be clad
Again in green?

(1894)

THE DANDELION†

JOHN B. TABB

With locks of gold to-day;
To-morrow, silver gray;
Then blossom-bald. Behold,
O man, thy fortune told!

a conceit, ingenious comparison

(1894)

EASTER†

JOHN B. TABB

Like a meteor, large and bright,
Fell a golden seed of light
On the field of Christmas night
When the Babe was born;
Then 'twas sepulchred in gloom
Till above His holy tomb
Flashed its everlasting bloom—
Flower of Easter morn.

(1894)

---

[1] *Vanderdecken.* The legendary captain of the *Flying Dutchman*, doomed to a perpetual attempt to round the Cape of Good Hope.

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DAISY

FRANCIS THOMPSON

Where the thistle lifts a purple crown
Six foot out of the turf,
And the harebell shakes on the windy hill—
O the breath of the distant surf!

The hills look over on the South,
And southward dreams the sea;
And, with the sea-breeze hand in hand,
Came innocence and she.

Where 'mid the gorse the raspberry
Red for the gatherer springs,
Two children did we stray and talk
Wise, idle, childish things.

She listened with big-lipped surprise,
Breast-deep 'mid flower and spine:
Her skin was like a grape, whose veins
Run snow instead of wine.

She knew not those sweet words she spake,
Nor knew her own sweet way;
But there's never a bird, so sweet a song
Thronged in whose throat that day!

Oh, there were flowers in Storrington
On the turf and on the spray;
But the sweetest flower on Sussex hills
Was the Daisy-flower that day!

Her beauty smoothed earth's furrowed face;
She gave me tokens three,—
A look, a word of her winsome mouth,
And a wild raspberry.

A berry red, a guileless look,
A still word,—strings of sand!
And yet they made my wild, wild heart
Fly down to her little hand.

For standing artless as the air,
And candid as the skies,
She took the berries with her hand,
And the love with her sweet eyes.

The fairest things have fleetest end,
Their scent survives their close;
But the rose's scent is bitterness
To him that loved the rose!

She looked a little wistfully,
Then went her sunshine way:
The sea's eye had a mist on it,
And the leaves fell from the day.

She went her unremembering way,
She went and left in me
The pang of all the partings gone
And partings yet to be.

She left me marvelling why my soul
Was sad that she was glad;
At all the sadness in the sweet,
The sweetness in the sad.

Still, still I seemed to see her, still
Look up with soft replies,
And take the berries with her hand,
And the love with her lovely eyes.

Nothing begins and nothing ends,
That is not paid with moan;
For we are born in others' pain,
And perish in our own.

(1895)

THE JOY OF THE HILLS

EDWIN MARKHAM

I ride on the mountain tops, I ride;
I have found my life and am satisfied.
Onward I ride in the blowing oats,
Checking the field-lark's rippling notes—
Lightly I sweep
From steep to steep:
Over my head through the branches high
Come glimpses of a rushing sky;
The tall oats brush my horse's flanks;
Wild poppies crowd on the sunny banks;
A bee booms out of the scented grass;
A jay laughs with me as I pass.

I ride on the hills, I forgive, I forget
Life's hoard of regret—
All the terror and pain
Of the chafing chain.
Grind on, O cities, grind:
I leave you a blur behind.
I am lifted elate—the skies expand:
Here the world's heaped gold is a pile of sand.
Let them weary and work in their narrow walls:
I ride with the voices of waterfalls!

I swing on as one in a dream—I swing
Down the airy hollows, I shout, I sing!
The world is gone like an empty word:
My body's a bough in the wind, my heart a bird!

(1895)

AN ANGLER'S WISH

HENRY VAN DYKE

I

When tulips bloom in Union Square,
And timid breaths of vernal air
Go wandering down the dusty town,
Like children lost in Vanity Fair;

When every long, unlovely row
Of westward houses stands aglow,
And leads the eyes towards sunset skies
Beyond the hills where green trees grow,—

Then weary seems the street parade,
And weary books, and weary trade;
I'm only wishing to go a-fishing;
For this the month of May was made.

II

I guess the pussy-willows now
Are creeping out on every bough
Along the brook; and robins look
For early worms behind the plough.

The thistle-birds have changed their dun
For yellow coats, to match the sun;
And in the same array of flame
The Dandelion Show's begun.

The flocks of young anemones
Are dancing round the budding trees:
Who can help wishing to go a-fishing
In days as full of joy as these?

III

I think the meadow-lark's clear sound
Leaks slowly upward from the ground,
While on the wing the blue-birds ring
Their wedding-bells to woods around.

The flirting chewink calls his dear
Behind the bush; and very near,
Where water flows, where green grass grows,
Song-sparrows gently sing, "Good cheer."

And, best of all, through twilight's calm
The hermit-thrush repeats his psalm.
How much I'm wishing to go a-fishing
In days so sweet with music's balm!

IV

'Tis not a proud desire of mine;
I ask for nothing superfine;
No heavy weight, no salmon great,
To break the record—or my line:

Only an idle little stream,
Whose amber waters softly gleam,
Where I may wade, through woodland shade,
And cast the fly, and loaf, and dream:

Only a trout or two, to dart
From foaming pools, and try my art:
'Tis all I'm wishing—old-fashioned fishing,
And just a day on Nature's heart.

(1895)

AFTER CONSTRUING*

ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON

Lord Cæsar, when you sternly wrote
The story of your grim campaigns,
And watched the ragged smoke-wreath float
Above the burning plains,

Amid the impenetrable wood,
Amid the camp's incessant hum,
At eve, beside the tumbling flood
In high Avaricum,

You little recked, imperious head,
When shrilled your shattering trumpet's noise,
Your frigid sections would be read
By bright-eyed English boys.

Ah me! who penetrates to-day
The secret of your deep designs?
Your sovereign visions, as you lay
Amid the sleeping lines?

The Mantuan singer[1] pleading stands;
From century to century
He leans and reaches wistful hands,
And cannot bear to die.

---

[1] *Mantuan singer.* Virgil.

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But you are silent, secret, proud,
No smile upon your haggard face,
As when you eyed the murderous crowd
Beside the statue's base.

I marvel: that Titanic heart
Beats strongly through the arid page,
And we, self-conscious sons of art,
In this bewildering age,

Like dizzy revelers stumbling out
Upon the pure and peaceful night,
Are sobered into troubled doubt,
As swims across our sight.

The ray of that sequestered sun,
Far in the illimitable blue,—
The dream of all you left undone,
Of all you dared to do.

(1895)

EACH IN HIS OWN TONGUE

WILLIAM HERBERT CARRUTH

A fire-mist and a planet,
A crystal and a cell,
A jelly-fish and a saurian,[1]
And caves where the cave-men dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty
And a face turned from the clod—
Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God.

A haze on the far horizon,
The infinite, tender sky,
The ripe rich tint of the cornfields,
And the wild geese sailing high—
And all over upland and lowland
The charm of the golden-rod—
Some of us call it Autumn
And others call it God.

Like tides on a crescent sea-beach,
When the moon is new and thin,
Into our hearts high yearnings
Come welling and surging in—
Come from the mystic ocean,
Whose rim no foot has trod,—
Some of us call it Longing,
And others call it God.

A picket frozen on duty,
A mother starved for her brood,
Socrates drinking the hemlock,
And Jesus on the rood;[1]
And millions who, humble and nameless,
The straight, hard pathway plod,—
Some call it Consecration,
And others call it God.

(1895)

EVENSONG

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

The embers of the day are red
Beyond the murky hill.
The kitchen smokes: the bed
In the darkling house is spread:
The great sky darkens overhead,
And the great woods are shrill.
So far have I been led,
Lord, by Thy will:
So far I have followed, Lord, and wondered still.

The breeze from the embalmèd land
Blows sudden toward the shore,
And claps my cottage door.
I hear the signal, Lord—I understand.
The night at Thy command
Comes. I will eat and sleep and will not question more.

(1895)

TO AN ATHLETE DYING YOUNG

A. E. HOUSMAN

[This and the following poem are from the collection called *A Shropshire Lad.*]

The time you won your town the race
We chaired you through the market-place;
Man and boy stood cheering by,
And home we brought you shoulder-high.

To-day, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsman of a stiller town.

Smart lad, to slip betimes away
From fields where glory does not stay,
And early though the laurel grows
It withers quicker than the rose.

---

[1] *saurian.* Reptile.

[1] *rood.* Cross.

Eyes the shady night has shut
Cannot see the record cut,
And silence sounds no worse than cheers
After earth has stopped the ears:

Now you will not swell the rout
Of lads that wore their honors out,
Runners whom renown outran
And the name died before the man.

So set, before its echoes fade,
The fleet foot on the sill of shade,
And hold to the low lintel up
The still-defended challenge-cup.

And round that early-laurelled head
Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,
And find unwithered on its curls
The garland briefer than a girl's.

(1896)

LAD, HAVE YOU THINGS TO DO?

A. E. HOUSMAN

Say, lad, have you things to do?
  Quick then, while your day's at prime,
Quick, and if 'tis work for two,
  Here am I, man: now's your time.

Send me now, and I shall go;
  Call me, I shall hear you call;
Use me ere they lay me low
  Where a man's no use at all;

Ere the wholesome flesh decay,
  And the willing nerve be numb,
And the lips lack breath to say,
  "No, my lad, I cannot come."

(1896)

AT THE END OF THE DAY*

RICHARD HOVEY

There is no escape by the river,
There is no flight left by the fen;
We are compassed about by the shiver
Of the night of their marching men.
Give a cheer!
For our hearts shall not give way.
Here's to a dark to-morrow,
And here's to a brave to-day!

The tale[1] of their hosts is countless,
And the tale of ours a score;
But the palm is naught to the dauntless,
And the cause is more and more.
Give a cheer!
We may die, but not give way.
Here's to a silent to-morrow,
And here's to a stout to-day!

God has said: "Ye shall fail and perish;
But the thrill ye have felt to-night
I shall keep in my heart and cherish
When the worlds have passed in night."
Give a cheer!
For the soul shall not give way.
Here's to the greater to-morrow
That is born of a great to-day!

Now shame on the craven truckler
And the puling things that mope!
We've a rapture for our buckler
That outwears the wings of hope.
Give a cheer!
For our joy shall not give way.
Here's in the teeth of to-morrow
To the glory of to-day!

(1896)

GUILIELMUS REX

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

[The title means "King William."]

The folk who lived in Shakespeare's day
And saw that gentle figure pass
By London Bridge, his frequent way—
They little knew what man he was.

The pointed beard, the courteous mien,
The equal port[2] to high and low,
All this they saw or might have seen—
But not the light behind the brow!

The doublet's modest gray or brown,
The slender sword-hilt's plain device,
What sign had these for prince or clown?
Few turned, or none, to scan him twice.

Yet 'twas the king of England's kings!
The rest with all their pomps and trains
Are mouldered, half-remembered things—
'Tis he alone that lives and reigns!

(1896)

---

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[1] *tale.* Number.
[2] *equal port.* Same manner.

AMERICA AND ENGLAND*

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

[These sonnets are from a group published "when there was talk of war with England."]

What is the strength of England, and her pride
Among the nations, when she makes her boast?
Has the East heard it, where her far-flung host
Hangs like a javelin in India's side?
Does the sea know it, where her navies ride,
Like towers of stars, about the silver coast,
Or from the great Capes to the uttermost
Parts of the North like ocean meteors glide?
Answer, O South, if yet where Gordon[1] sank,
Spent arrow of the far and lone Soudan,
There comes a whisper out of wasted death!
O every ocean, every land, that drank
The blood of England, answer, if ye can,
What is it that giveth her immortal breath?

Then the West answered: "Is the sword's keen edge
Like to the mind for sharpness? Doth the flame
Devour like thought? Many with chariots came,
Squadron and phalanx, legion, square, and wedge;
They mounted up; they wound from ledge to ledge
Of battle-glory dark with battle-shame;
But God hath hurled them from the heights of fame
Who from the soul took no eternal pledge.
Because above her people and her throne
She hath erected reason's sovereignty;
Because wherever human speech is known
The touch of English breath doth make thought free;
Therefore forever is her glory blown
About the hills, and flashed beneath the sea."

(1896)

---

[1] *Gordon.* General Charles George Gordon, who was killed in the Soudan in 1885.

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THE SECRET*

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

Nightingales warble about it
All night under blossom and star;
The wild swan is dying without it,
And the eagle crieth afar;
The sun, he doth mount but to find it,
Searching the green earth o'er;
But more doth a man's heart mind it—
O more, more, more!

Over the gray leagues of ocean
The infinite yearneth alone;
The forests with wandering emotion
The thing they know not intone;
Creation arose but to see it,
A million lamps in the blue;
But a lover, he shall be it,
If one sweet maid is true.

(1897)

DRAKE'S DRUM

HENRY NEWBOLT

[This is a sailor's "chantey," in praise of the great British Admiral, Sir Francis Drake, who was born in Devonshire, 1540, and was buried at sea in the Caribbean, January, 1596. The poem embodies one of many legends respecting Drake's promise to return to the help of England in case of need.]

Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,[1]
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.[2]

Yarnder lumes the island, yarnder lie the ships,
Wi' sailor lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,
An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide dashin',—
He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

Drake he was a Devon man, an' ruled the Devon seas
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?);
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.

---

[1] *Nombre Dios Bay.* Off the Panama coast; the scene of Drake's last days.

[2] *Plymouth Hoe.* A headland at Plymouth.

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"Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,
An' drum them up the Channel as we drummed them long ago."

Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,
Call him when ye sail to meet the foe;
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag flyin',
They shall find him ware an' wakin', as they found him long ago!

(1897)

ALTRUISM

DAVID STARR JORDAN

[With the last three stanzas the reader may compare Tennyson's "By an Evolutionist" (page 361) and Moody's "The Menagerie" (page 379) as examples of the poetic interpretation of the theory of biological evolution.]

"The God of things as they are"
Is the God of the highest heaven;
The God of the morning star,
Of the thrush that sings at even;

The God of the storm and sunshine,
Of the wolf, the snail, and the bee,
Of the Alp's majestic silence,
Of the soundless depths of the sea;

The God of the times and the nations,
Of the planets as they roll,
Of the numberless constellations,
Of the limitless human soul.

For there is nothing small,
And naught can mighty be;
Archangels and atoms all
Embodiments of Thee!

A single thought divine
Holds stars and suns in space;
A dream of man is Thine,
And history finds its place.

When the universe was young,
Thine was the perfect thought
That life should be bound in one
By the strand of Love inwrought.

In the life of the fern and the lily,
Of the dragon and the dove,
Still through the stress and struggle
Waxes the bond of Love.

Out from the ruthless ages
Rises, like incense mild,
The love of the man and the woman,
The love of mother and child.

(1897)

RECESSIONAL

RUDYARD KIPLING

[Written at the close of the great British festival in honor of the 60th anniversary of Victoria's accession to the throne.]

God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;
The Captains and the Kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away;
On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
Or lesser breeds without the Law—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard,
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding, calls not Thee to guard,
For frantic boast and foolish word—
Thy mercy on Thy People, Lord!

(1897)

WHEN THE GREAT GRAY SHIPS COME IN*

(*New York Harbor, August* 20, 1898)

GUY WETMORE CARRYL

[On the conclusion of the war with Spain.]

To eastward ringing, to westward winging, o'er mapless miles of sea,
On winds and tides the gospel rides that the furthermost isles are free,
And the furthermost isles make answer; harbor, and height, and hill,
Breaker and beach cry each to each, "'Tis the Mother who calls! Be still!"
Mother! new-found, beloved, and strong to hold from harm,
Stretching to these across the seas the shield of her sovereign arm,
Who summoned the guns of her sailor sons, who bade her navies roam,
Who calls again to the leagues of main, and who calls them this time home!

And the great gray ships are silent, and the weary watchers rest,
The black cloud dies in the August skies, and deep in the golden west
Invisible hands are limning a glory of crimson bars,
And far above is the wonder of a myriad wakened stars!
Peace! As the tidings silence the strenuous cannonade,
Peace at last! is the bugle blast the length of the long blockade,
And eyes of vigil weary are lit with the glad release,
From ship to ship and from lip to lip it is "Peace! Thank God for peace."

Ah, in the sweet hereafter Columbia still shall show
The sons of these who swept the seas how she bade them rise and go,—
How, when the stirring summons smote on her children's ear,
South and North at the call stood forth, and the whole land answered "Here!"
For the soul of the soldier's story and the heart of the sailor's song
Are all of those who meet their foes as right should meet with wrong,
Who fight their guns till the foeman runs, and then, on the decks they trod,
Brave faces raise, and give the praise to the grace of their country's God!

Yes, it is good to battle, and good to be strong and free,
To carry the hearts of a people to the uttermost ends of sea,
To see the day steal up the bay where the enemy lies in wait,
To run your ship to the harbor's lip and sink her across the strait:
But better the golden evening when the ships round heads for home,
And the long gray miles slip swiftly past in a swirl of seething foam,
And the people wait at the haven's gate to greet the men who win!
Thank God for peace! Thank God for peace, when the great gray ships come in!

(1898)

UNMANIFEST DESTINY†

RICHARD HOVEY

[Written when the war between the United States and Spain had brought into use the phrase "manifest destiny," with reference to the new world-policy of the nation.]

To what new fates, my country, far
  And unforeseen of foe or friend,
Beneath what unexpected star,
  Compelled to what unchosen end,

Across the sea that knows no beach
  The Admiral of the Nation guides
Thy blind obedient keels to reach
  The harbor where thy future rides!

The guns that spoke at Lexington
  Knew not that God was planning then
The trumpet word of Jefferson
  To bugle forth the rights of men.

To them that wept and cursed Bull Run,
  What was it but despair and shame?
Who saw behind the cloud the sun?
  Who knew that God was in the flame?

---

* From "The Garden of Years and Other Poems," courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons, publishers.

† Reprinted by special permission of Duffield & Company.

Social-Question is whether man is learning to use machinery

Had not defeat upon defeat,
  Disaster on disaster come,
The slave's emancipated feet
  Had never marched behind the drum.

There is a Hand that bends our deeds
  To mightier issues than we planned;
Each son that triumphs, each that bleeds,
  My country, serves Its dark command.

I do not know beneath what sky
  Nor on what seas shall be thy fate;
I only know it shall be high,
  I only know it shall be great.

(1898)

TWO TAVERNS

EDWIN MARKHAM

I remember how I lay
On a bank a summer day,
Where the poppies in full flower
Danced away their golden hour,
Till the air grew strangely chill
At the darkening of the hill;
Then I saw a wild bee dart
Out of the cold to the poppy's heart;
Saw the petals gently spin,
And shut the little lodger in.

Then I took the quiet road
To my own secure abode.
All night long his tavern hung;
Now it rested, now it swung;
I asleep in steadfast tower,
He asleep in stirring flower;
In our hearts the same delight
In the hushes of the night;
Over us both the same dear care,
As we slumbered unaware.

(1899)

PRELUDE*

MADISON CAWEIN

There is no rhyme that is half so sweet
As the song of the wind in the rippling
    wheat;
There is no metre that's half so fine
As the lilt of the brook under rock and
    vine;
And the loveliest lyric I ever heard
Was the wildwood strain of a forest
    bird.—
If the wind and the brook and the bird
    would teach
My heart their beautiful parts of speech,
And the natural art that they say these
    with,
My soul would sing of beauty and myth
In a rhyme and metre that none before
Have sung in their love, or dreamed in
    their lore,
And the world would be richer one poet
    the more.

(1899)

GLOUCESTER MOORS

WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY

[The reader should note carefully how the image of earth as a ship (lines 28-36), seemingly suggested by the scene on the Massachusetts coast, controls the whole further development of the poem, when the theme changes from landscape to the problem of man in society.]

A mile behind is Gloucester town
Where the fishing fleets put in,
A mile ahead the land dips down
And the woods and farms begin.
Here, where the moors stretch free
In the high blue afternoon,
Are the marching sun and talking sea,
And the racing winds that wheel and flee
On the flying heels of June.

Jill-o'er-the-ground is purple blue,
Blue is the quaker-maid,
The wild geranium holds its dew
Long in the boulder's shade.
Wax-red hangs the cup
From the huckleberry boughs,
In barberry bells the gray moths sup,
Or where the choke-cherry lifts high up
Sweet bowls for their carouse.

Over the shelf of the sandy cove
Beach-peas blossom late.
By copse and cliff the swallows rove
Each calling to his mate.
Seaward the sea-gulls go,
And the land-birds all are here;
That green-gold flash was a vireo,
And yonder flame where the marsh-flags
    grow
Was a scarlet tanager.

---

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This earth is not the steadfast place
We landsmen build upon;
From deep to deep she varies pace,
And while she comes is gone.
Beneath my feet I feel
Her smooth bulk heave and dip;
With velvet plunge and soft upreel
She swings and steadies to her keel
Like a gallant, gallant ship.

These summer clouds she sets for sail,
The sun is her mast-head light,
She tows the moon like a pinnace frail
Where her phosphor wake churns bright.
Now hid, now looming clear,
On the face of the dangerous blue
The star-fleets tack and wheel and veer,
But on, but on does the old earth steer
As if her port she knew.

God, dear God! Does she know her port,
Though she goes so far about?
Or blind astray, does she make her sport
To brazen and chance it out?
I watched when her captains passed:
She were better captainless.
Men in the cabin, before the mast,
But some were reckless and some aghast,
And some sat gorged at mess.

By her battened hatch I leaned and caught
Sounds from the noisome hold,—
Cursing and sighing of souls distraught
And cries too sad to be told.
Then I strove to go down and see;
But they said, "Thou art not of us!"
I turned to those on the deck with me
And cried, "Give help!" But they said, "Let be:
Our ship sails faster thus."

Jill-o'er-the-ground is purple blue,
Blue is the quaker-maid,
The alder-clump where the brook comes through
Breeds cresses in its shade.
To be out of the moiling street
With its swelter and its sin!
Who has given to me this sweet,
And given my brother dust to eat?
And when will his wage come in?

Scattering wide or blown in ranks,
Yellow and white and brown,
Boats and boats from the fishing banks
Come home to Gloucester town,
There is cash to purse and spend,
There are wives to be embraced,
Hearts to borrow and hearts to lend,
And hearts to take and keep to the end,—
O little sails, make haste!

But thou, vast outbound ship of souls,
What harbor town for thee?
What shapes, when thy arriving tolls,[1]
Shall crowd the banks to see?
Shall all the happy shipmates then
Stand singing brotherly?
Or shall a haggard ruthless few
Warp her over and bring her to,
While the many broken souls of men
Fester down in the slaver's pen,
And nothing to say or do?

(1900)

[illegible] White Stukey

THE MENAGERIE

WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY

[This is a dramatic monologue, from which the reader must infer indirectly the scene and the character of the person speaking. Lines 41-50, 61-70, and 101-115 are among the most remarkable passages in which the biological theory of evolution has been interpreted by poetry.]

Thank God my brain is not inclined to cut
Such capers every day! I'm just about
Mellow, but then—There goes the tent-flap shut.
Rain's in the wind. I thought so: every snout
Was twitching when the keeper turned me out.

That screaming parrot makes my blood run cold.
Gabriel's trump! the big bull elephant
Squeals "Rain" to the parched herd. The monkeys scold,
And jabber that it's rain water they want.
(It makes me sick to see a monkey pant.)

I'll foot it home, to try and make believe
I'm sober. After this I stick to beer,
And drop the circus when the sane folks leave.
A man's a fool to look at things too near:
They look back, and begin to cut up queer.

---

[1] An allusion to the custom of tolling the wharf-bell as announcement of a homecoming fishing schooner.

Beasts do, at any rate; especially
Wild devils caged. They have the coolest way
Of being something else than what you see:
You pass a sleek young zebra nosing hay,
A nylghau looking bored and distingué,—

And think you've seen a donkey and a bird.
Not on your life! Just glance back, if you dare.
The zebra chews, the nylghau hasn't stirred;
But something's happened, Heaven knows what or where,
To freeze your scalp and pompadour your hair.

I'm not precisely an æolian lute
Hung in the wandering winds of sentiment,
But drown me if the ugliest, meanest brute
Grunting and fretting in that sultry tent
Didn't just floor me with embarrassment!

'Twas like a thunder-clap from out the clear,—
One minute they were circus beasts, some grand,
Some ugly, some amusing, and some queer:
Rival attractions to the hobo band,
The flying jenny, and the peanut stand.

Next minute there were old hearth-mates of mine!
Lost people, eyeing me with such a stare!
Patient, satiric, devilish, divine;
A gaze of hopeless envy, squalid care,
Hatred, and thwarted love, and dim despair.

Within my blood my ancient kindred spoke,—
Grotesque and monstrous voices, heard afar
Down ocean caves when behemoth awoke,
Or through fern forests roared the plesiosaur
Locked with the giant-bat in ghastly war.

And suddenly, as in a flash of light,
I saw great Nature working out her plan;
Through all her shapes from mastodon to mite
Forever groping, testing, passing on
To find at last the shape and soul of Man.

Till in the fulness of accomplished time,
Comes brother Forepaugh,[1] upon business bent,
Tracks her through frozen and through torrid clime,
And shows us, neatly labeled in a tent,
The stages of her huge experiment;

Blabbing aloud her shy and reticent hours;
Dragging to light her blinking, slothful moods;
Publishing fretful seasons when her powers
Worked wild and sullen in her solitudes,
Or when her mordant laughter shook the woods.

Here, round about me, were her vagrant births;
Sick dreams she had, fierce projects she essayed;
Her qualms, her fiery prides, her crazy mirths;
The troublings of her spirit as she strayed,
Cringed, gloated, mocked, was lordly, was afraid,

On that long road she went to seek mankind;
Here were the darkling coverts that she beat
To find the Hider she was sent to find;
Here the distracted footprints of her feet
Whereby her soul's Desire she came to greet.

But why should they, her botch-work, turn about
And stare disdain at me, her finished job?
Why was the place one vast suspended shout
Of laughter? Why did all the daylight throb
With soundless guffaw and dumb-stricken sob?

Helpless I stood among those awful cages;
The beasts were walking loose, and I was bagged!
I, I, last product of the toiling ages,
Goal of heroic feet that never lagged,—
A little man in trousers, slightly jagged.

Deliver me from such another jury!
The Judgment-day will be a picnic to't.
Their satire was more dreadful than their fury,
And worst of all was just a kind of brute
Disgust, and giving up, and sinking mute.

Nature as working up from a germ to man

---

[1] *Forepaugh.* The proprietor of the menagerie.

Survival of the fittest, adaptation,
And all their other evolution terms,
Seem to omit one small consideration,
To wit, that tumblebugs and angleworms
Have souls: there's soul in everything that squirms.

And souls are restless, plagued, impatient things,
All dream and unaccountable desire;
Crawling, but pestered with the thought of wings;
Spreading through every inch of earth's old mire
Mystical hanker after something higher.

Wishes *are* horses, as I understand.
I guess a wistful polyp that has strokes
Of feeling faint to gallivant on land
Will come to be a scandal to his folks;
Legs he will sprout, in spite of threats and jokes.

And at the core of every life that crawls
Or runs or flies or swims or vegetates—
Churning the mammoth's heart-blood, in the galls
Of shark and tiger planting gorgeous hates,
Lighting the love of eagles for their mates;

Yes, in the dim brain of the jellied fish
That is and is not living—moved and stirred
From the beginning a mysterious wish,
A vision, a command, a fatal Word:
The name of Man was uttered, and they heard.

Upward along the æons of old war
They sought him: wing and shank-bone, claw and bill
Were fashioned and rejected; wide and far
They roamed the twilight jungles of their will;
But still they sought him, and desired him still.

Man they desired, but mind you, Perfect Man,
The radiant and the loving, yet to be!
I hardly wonder, when they came to scan
The upshot of their strenuosity,
They gazed with mixed emotions upon *me*.

Well, my advice to you is, Face the creatures,
Or spot them sideways with your weather eye,
Just to keep tab on their expansive features;
It isn't pleasant when you're stepping high
To catch a giraffe smiling on the sly.

If nature made you graceful, don't get gay
Back-to before the hippopotamus;
If meek and godly, find some place to play
Besides right where three mad hyenas fuss:
You may hear language that we won't discuss.

If you're a sweet thing in a flower-bed hat,
Or her best fellow with your tie tucked in,
Don't squander love's bright springtime girding at
An old chimpanzee with an Irish chin:
There may be hidden meaning in his grin.

(1901)

SEA FEVER*

JOHN MASEFIELD

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a gray mist on the sea's face, and a gray dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way, where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

(1902)

---

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KEW IN LILAC-TIME

ALFRED NOYES

[One of the lyrics supposed to be heard by the poet in the music of a street-piano in London; from a long poem called "The Barrel-Organ."]

Go down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
  Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!).

The cherry-trees are seas of bloom and soft perfume and sweet perfume,
  The cherry-trees are seas of bloom (and oh, so near to London!),
And there, they say, when dawn is high and all the world's a blaze of sky,
  The cuckoo, though he's very shy, will sing a song for London.

The Dorian nightingale is rare and yet they say you'll hear him there
  At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near to London!),
The linnet and the throstle, too, and after dark the long halloo
  And golden-eyed *tu-whit, tu-whoo* of owls that ogle London.

For Noah hardly knew a bird of any kind that isn't heard
  At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near to London!).
And when the rose begins to pout and all the chestnut spires are out
  You'll hear the rest without a doubt, all chorusing for London:—

Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
  Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!),
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland;
  Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!).

(1904)

from Bible

Idea of Walking in the Cool of the evening

IN THE COOL OF THE EVENING

ALFRED NOYES

In the cool of the evening, when the low sweet whispers waken,
  When the laborers turn them homeward, and the weary have their will,
When the censers of the roses o'er the forest-aisles are shaken,
  Is it but the wind that cometh o'er the far green hill?

For they say 'tis but the sunset winds that wander through the heather,
  Rustle all the meadow-grass and bend the dewy fern;
They say 'tis but the winds that bow the reeds in prayer together,
  And fill the shaken pools with fire along the shadowy burn,

In the beauty of the twilight, in the Garden that He loveth,
  They have veiled His lovely vesture with the darkness of a name!
Thro' His Garden, thro' His Garden it is but the wind that moveth,
  No more; but O, the miracle, the miracle is the same!

In the cool of the evening, when the sky is an old story
  Slowly dying, but remembered, ay, and loved with passion still, mine
Hush! . . . the fringes of His garment, in the fading golden glory,
  Softly rustling as He cometh o'er the far green hill.

(1907) Fact that a name often
we forget that God is one a [illegible]

SOMETIMES *

THOMAS S. JONES, Jr.

Across the fields of yesterday
  He sometimes comes to me,
A little lad just back from play—
  The lad I used to be.

And yet he smiles so wistfully
  Once he has crept within,
I wonder if he hopes to see
  The man I might have been.

(1907)

TO A GREEK BOOTBLACK†

O. W. FIRKINS

In a dusk and scant retreat,
Fronting on the noisy street,
Six lads, quick of hands and feet,
Ply a trade for song unmeet,
  In the passer's careless view:

---

* Reprinted from "The Rose-Jar," published by Thomas Bird Mosher, by special permission of the author.

† Reprinted by special permission from the author and *The Atlantic Monthly*.

I, from Saxon loins that rose—
Churl or swain or serf—who knows?—
High-reared, propping heels and toes,
Brood in meditant repose
  O'er the Greek who blacks my shoe.

Round black head that fronts my knees,
Cheeks whose tint might tempt the bees,
Profile scarcely formed to please
Myron or Praxiteles,[1]
  Yet of dainty mould and coy;
Eyes whose owner ne'er may guess
What appealing tenderness,
Dream-like in their veiled recess,
Deep and dark their spheres express—
  Longings alien to the boy.

Reascends the ancient æon:
Winds that o'er the broad Ægean
Skyward lift the joyous pæan,
Chanted as with pipes Pandæan[2]
  O'er the Persian's broken line;
Trail of purple-hemmed himations,[3]
Foam and fragrance of libations,
Viols, harp and flute vibrations,
  Olives, and the Chian vine.[4]

Not for him the dream is spun;
From his lips, unheeding one,
In a lasting torrent run
Accents strange to Xenophon,
  Tones Cithæron[5] never knew:
What to him the ages' sickle?
What the thought that time is fickle?
Brisk, he takes the proffered nickel;
  Eager, seeks the waiting shoe.

Meagre, in this narrowed sluice,
Flows the rich-hued Attic juice;
Shrunken ward of fallen Zeus,
I thy sandal should unloose—
  Sandals—they are vanished too!
Sad eclipse of antique splendor!
Poor blue shirt and crossed suspender!
Tribute gladly would I render;
Tears, or smiles than tears more tender—
  Little Greek that blacks my shoe.

(1908)

---

[1] Greek sculptors.

[2] *pipes Pandæan.* Pipes which the god Pan was said to have invented and played.

[3] *himations.* Greek outer garments.

[4] *Chian vine.* Wine from Chianti.

[5] *Cithæron.* A mountain region of Greece.

MIMMA BELLA

EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON

Sonnet

Consciousness awakening [illegible]
experience

[From a series of sonnets, called by the same title, in memory of the poet's little daughter.]

Lo, through the open window of the room
That was her nursery, a small bright spark
Comes wandering in, as falls the summer dark,
And with a measured flight explores the gloom,
As if it sought, among the things that loom
Vague in the dusk, for some familiar mark,
And like a light on some wee unseen bark,
It tacks in search of who knows what or whom?

I know 'tis but a fire-fly; yet its flight,
So straight, so measured, round the empty bed,
Might be a little soul's, that night sets free;
Superstitious dread
And as it nears, I feel my heart grow tight
With something like a superstitious dread,
And watch it breathless, lest it should be she.
Deep emotional eff.

(1909)

A LITTLE SONG OF LIFE*

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE

Glad that I live am I;
That the sky is blue;
Glad for the country lanes,
And the fall of dew.

After the sun the rain,
After the rain the sun;
This is the way of life,
Till the work be done.

All that we need to do,
Be we low or high,
Is to see that we grow
Nearer the sky.

(1909)

---

* Reprinted from "A Wayside Lute" by special permission of Thomas Bird Mosher.

SATURDAY NIGHT*

JAMES OPPENHEIM

— humanitarian

The lights of Saturday night beat golden, golden over the pillared street;
The long plate-glass of a Dream-World olden is as the footlights shining sweet.
Street-lamp—flambeau—glamor of trolley—comet-trail of the trains above,
Splash where the jostling crowds are jolly with echoing laughter and human love.

This is the City of the Enchanted, and these are her enchanted people;
Far and far is Daylight, haunted with whistle of mill and bell of steeple.
The eastern tenements loose the women, the western flats release the wives
To touch, where all the ways are common, a glory to their sweated lives.

The leather of shoes in the brilliant casement sheds a lustre over the heart;
The high-heaped fruit in the flaring basement glows with the tints of Turner's art.
Darwin's dream and the eye of Spencer saw not such a gloried race[1]
As here, in copper light intenser than desert sun, glides face by face.

This drab washwoman dazed and breathless, ray-chiseled in the golden stream,
Is a magic statue standing deathless, her tub and soap-suds touched with Dream.
Yea, in this people, glamor-sunnied, democracy wins heaven again;
Here the unlearned and the unmoneyed laugh in the lights of Lover's Lane!

O Dream-World lights that lift through the ether millions of miles to the Milky Way!
To-night earth rolls through a golden weather that lights the Pleiades where they play!
Yet—God? Does he lead these sons and daughters? Yea, do they feel with a passion that stills,
God on the face of the moving waters, God in the quiet of the hills?

Yet—what if the million-mantled mountains, and what if the million-moving sea
Are here alone in façades and fountains—our deep stone-world of humanity—
We builders of cities and civilizations, walled away from the sea and the sod,
Must reach, dream-led, for our revelations through one another—as far as God.

Through one another—through one another—no more the gleam on sea or land,
But so close that we see the Brother, and understand—and understand!
Till, drawn in swept crowd closer, closer, we see the gleam in the human clod,
And clerk and foreman, peddler and grocer, are in our Family of God!

(1909)

COMRADES†

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

[In the original form these are the opening stanzas of a longer poem.]

Where are the friends that I knew in my Maying,
In the days of my youth, in the first of my roaming?
We were dear; we were leal;[2] O, far we went straying;
Now never a heart to my heart comes homing!—
Where is he now, the dark boy slender
Who taught me bare-back, stirrup and reins?
I loved him; he loved me; my beautiful, tender
Tamer of horses on grass-grown plains.

---

* From a volume entitled "Monday Morning." Reprinted by special permission of the publishers and the author.

† Reprinted by special permission of The Macmillan Company.

[1] Darwin and Spencer developed the doctrine of the evolution of man.

[2] *leal.* Loyal.

Where is he now whose eyes swam brighter,
Softer than love, in his turbulent charms;
Who taught me to strike, and to fall, dear fighter,
And gathered me up in his boyhood arms;
Taught me the rifle, and with me went riding,
Suppled my limbs to the horseman's war;
Where is he now, for whom my heart's biding,
Biding, biding—but he rides far!

O love that passes the love of woman!
Who that hath felt it shall ever forget,
When the breath of life with a throb turns human,
And a lad's heart is to a lad's heart set?
Ever, forever, lover and rover—
They shall cling, nor each from other shall part
Till the reign of the stars in the heavens be over,
And life is dust in each faithful heart!

(1910)

THE CONQUEST OF THE AIR*

HAROLD T. PULSIFER

With a thunder-driven heart
And the shimmer of new wings,
I, a worm that was, upstart,
King of kings!

I have heard the singing stars,
I have watched the sunset die,
As I burst the lucent bars
Of the sky.

Lo, the argosies of Spain,
As they plowed the naked brine,
Found no heaven-girded main
Like to mine.

Soaring from the clinging sod,
First and foremost of my race,
I have met the hosts of God
Face to face:

Met the tempest and the gale
Where the white moon-riven cloud
Wrapped the splendor of my sail
In a shroud.

Where the ghost of winter fled
Swift I followed with the snow,
Like a silver arrow sped
From a bow.

I have trailed the summer south
Like a flash of burnished gold,
When she fled the hungry mouth
Of the cold.

I have dogged the ranging sun
Till the world became a scroll;
All the oceans, one by one,
Were my goal.

Other wingèd men may come,
Pierce the heavens, chart the sky
Sound an echo to my drum
Ere I die.

I alone have seen the earth,
Age-old fetters swept aside,
In the glory of new birth—
Deified!

(1910)

THE UNCONQUERED AIR*

FLORENCE EARLE COATES

I

(1906)

Others endure Man's rule: he therefore deems
I shall endure it—I, the unconquered Air!
Imagines this triumphant strength may bear
His paltry sway! yea, ignorantly dreams,
Because proud Rhea[1] now his vassal seems,
And Neptune[2] him obeys in billowy lair,
That he a more sublime assault may dare,
Where blown by tempest wild the vulture screams!
Presumptuous, he mounts: I toss his bones
Back from the height supernal he has braved:
Ay, as his vessel nears my perilous zones,
I blow the cockle-shell away like chaff
And give him to the Sea he has enslaved.
He founders in its depths; and then I laugh!

---

* From "Mothers and Men," published by Houghton Mifflin Company, copyright, 1916. Reprinted by permission of author.

[1] *Rhea.* A goddess of earth.
[2] *Neptune.* The sea-god.
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II

(1911)

Impregnable I held myself, secure
Against intrusion. Who can measure Man?
How should I guess his mortal will outran
Defeat so far that danger could allure
For its own sake?—that he would all endure,
All sacrifice, all suffer, rather than
Forego the daring dreams Olympian
That prophesy to him of victory sure?
Ah, tameless Courage!—dominating power
That, all attempting, in a deathless hour
Made earth-born Titans[1] godlike, in revolt!—
Fear is the fire that melts Icarian wings:[2]
Who fears nor Fate, nor Time, nor what Time brings,
May drive Apollo's steeds, or wield the thunderbolt!

(1911)

"SCUM O' THE EARTH"

ROBERT HAVEN SCHAUFFLER

[The scene of this poem is set at the United States immigrant station in New York harbor. Compare the poetic argument for a liberal attitude toward the immigrant class, with that expressed in Aldrich's poem, page 366.]

At the gate of the West I stand,
On the isle where the nations throng.
We call them "scum o' the earth";
Stay, are we doing you wrong,
Young fellow from Socrates' land?—
You, like a Hermes so lissome and strong
Fresh from the master Praxiteles' hand?
So you're of Spartan birth?
Descended, perhaps, from one of the band—
Deathless in story and song—
Who combed their long hair at Thermopylæ's pass?
Ah, I forget the straits, alas!
More tragic than theirs, more compassion-worth,
That have doomed you to march in our "immigrant class"
Where you're nothing but "scum o' the earth."

You Pole with the child on your knee,
What dower bring you to the land of the free?
Hark! does she croon
That sad little tune
That Chopin once found on his Polish lea
And mounted in gold for you and for me?
Now a ragged young fiddler answers
In wild Czech melody
That Dvorak took whole from the dancers.
And the heavy faces bloom
In the wonderful Slavik way;
The little, dull eyes, the brows a-gloom,
Suddenly dawn like the day.
While, watching these folk and their mystery,
I forget that they're nothing worth;
That Bohemians, Slovaks, Croatians,
And men of all Slavik nations
Are "polacks"—and "scum o' the earth."

Genoese boy of the level brow,
Lad of the lustrous, dreamy eyes
A-stare at Manhattan's pinnacles now
In the first sweet shock of a hushed surprise;
Within your far-rapt seer's eyes
I catch the glow of the wild surmise
That played on the Santa Maria's[3] prow
In that still gray dawn,
Four centuries gone,
When a world from the wave began to rise.
Oh, it's hard to foretell what high emprise
Is the goal that gleams
When Italy's dreams
Spread wing and sweep into the skies.
Cæsar dreamed him a world ruled well;
Dante dreamed Heaven out of Hell;
Angelo brought us there to dwell;
And you, are you of a different birth?—
You're only a "dago,"—and "scum o' the earth"!

Stay, are we doing you wrong
Calling you "scum o' the earth,"
Man of the sorrow-bowed head,
Of the features tender yet strong,—
Man of the eyes full of wisdom and mystery
Mingled with patience and dread?
Have not I known you in history,
Sorrow-bowed head?

---

[1] *Titans.* Who dared to war against the ancient gods.

[2] *Icarian wings.* Icarus made wings for himself, but when he flew too near the sun, the wax that held them melted, and he fell into the sea.

[3] *Santa Maria.* Columbus's ship.

Were you the poet-king,[1] worth
Treasures of Ophir unpriced?
Were you the prophet, perchance, whose art
Foretold how the rabble would mock
That shepherd of spirits, erelong,
Who should carry the lambs on his heart
And tenderly feed his flock?[2]
Man—lift that sorrow-bowed head.
Lo! 'tis the face of the Christ!
The vision dies at its birth.
You're merely a butt for our mirth.
You're a "sheeny"—and therefore despised
And rejected as "scum o' the earth."

Countrymen, bend and invoke
Mercy for us blasphemers,
For that we spat on this marvellous folk,
Nations of darers and dreamers,
Scions of singers and seers,
Our peers, and more than our peers.
"Rabble and refuse" we name them,
And "scum o' the earth," to shame them.
Mercy for us of the few, young years,
Of the culture so callow and crude,
Of the hands so grasping and rude,
The lips so ready for sneers
At the sons of our ancient more-than-peers.
Mercy for us who dare despise
Men in whose loins our Homer lies;
Mothers of men who shall bring to us
The glory of Titian, the grandeur of Huss;[3]
Children in whose frail arms shall rest
Prophets and singers and saints of the West.

Newcomers all from the eastern seas,
Help us incarnate dreams like these.
Forget, and forgive, that we did you wrong.
Help us to father a nation, strong
In the comradeship of an equal birth,
In the wealth of the richest bloods of earth.

(1911)

THE MERRY-GO-ROUND

MARGARET L. WOODS

[From a long poem called *"Marlborough Fair."*]

Merry-go-round is a-turning, turning!
What will you mount upon, where will you ride?
Merry-go-round is a-turning!
Where the gilded chariots glide
Merry-go-round is a-calling, calling,
Where the galloping horses arch in pride
Their elegant necks with manes a-flowing
And scarlet nostrils bravely glowing,
The dapple and white, the black and the bay.
The organ is high over every sound,
You can hear it calling a mile away,
It is whirling its galloping tune around
While the merry-go-round is turning, turning!

Whither away goes the Merry-go-round,
Busily whirling, dizzily whirling?
Say, on its narrow circle of ground,
Fast or slow though it go, it abides,
And the company giddily, giddily glides.
Dabs of color, red country faces,
A crimson feather, a grass-green sash,
The white of a dress or a bonnet flash,
Appear, disappear, and appear again,
Like beads on a rapid revolving chain
That is tense with the force of its own motion,
Busily whirling, dizzily whirling.

Yet with the wheel of the Merry-go-round
On manifold roads do the riders travel,
On wonderful ways, in marvellous places.
They have drunk of a wind like a wizard's potion,
And the spin of the wheel to a rush and a ravel
Of color and noise, a skein unwound
Rapidly, something meaningless, blurred,
Transforms the eddying Fair's commotion,
While the Merry-go-round, the Merry-go-round
    Is turning, turning.

Over meadow and fallow with horn and hound
Goes the galloping gray of the farmer's boy,

---

[1] *poet-king.* David.
[2] See *Isaiah* 40:11.
[3] An Italian painter, and a Bohemian leader of the Protestant Reformation.

And the soldier's son with a valorous joy
On the enemy's roaring guns has spurred
His bay, and the couple at ease in the yellow
And azure car—the peony pride
Of the sweetheart, the grin of the rustic fellow!—
Are riding like gentlefolks in a carriage;
The church-bells ring in a downland village,
And he is the bridegroom and she the bride.
On a white steed, with a bridle of gold,
The child in the broidery frock is flying.
Beneath her the suns of the world have rolled
And she sees the enchanted countries lying,
With palm and minaret, fairy and Djinn,[1]
Beautiful ladies and palace halls
Where the gold-fish swim, and no foot falls
And a king half marble throned therein.

But the Merry-go-round is turning, turning
Slower; until as a chain drops slack
When the speed of it fails, in a moment, back
The riders suddenly come, descend
Amazed that the journey should have an end
And they be standing upon the ground.
But the Merry-go-round, the Merry-go-round
Above them still will be turning, turning.

Like the wheel of Life it is turning, turning;
While they wondering stand, with a burden new,
It is off and away with a brave young crew.
Watch how forth overhead they are faring,
Mounted and glorious, proudly staring,
O'er the humbled world they leave behind.
They are swinging the way-worn circle round,
Busily whirling, dizzily whirling,
They are swift on the tide, they are sailing the wind,
To shores where never a ship was bound,
To the Fortunate Isles that will never be found,
On the track of the stars that are yet to find,
Busily whirling, dizzily whirling
On the Merry-go-round, the Merry-go-round!

But hardly the journey appears begun,
And the riders firm in the saddle seated,
When the flying circles are all completed,
The riders down, and the journey is done.
Staring they stand, while away with its new
Spirited, arrogant, splendid crew,
The Merry-go-round is turning, turning.

(1911)

JESUS THE CARPENTER

CHARLES M. SHELDON

If I could hold within my hand
The hammer Jesus swung,
Not all the gold in all the land,
Nor jewels countless as the sand,
All in the balance flung,
Could weigh the value of that thing
Round which his fingers once did cling.

If I could have the table he
Once made in Nazareth,
Not all the pearls in all the sea,
Nor crowns of kings, or kings to be
As long as men have breath,
Could buy that thing of wood he made—
The Lord of Lords who learned a trade.

Yes, but his hammer still is shown
By honest hands that toil,
And round his table men sit down,
And all are equals, with a crown
No gold nor pearls can soil.
The shop at Nazareth was bare,
But Brotherhood was builded there.

(1911)

THE MOTHER

KATHARINE TYNAN

There is no height, no depth, that could set us apart—
Body of mine and soul of mine, heart of my heart.

---

[1] *Djinn.* A Mohammedan spirit, made of fire.

There is no sea so deep, no mountain so high,
That I could not come to you if I heard you cry.

There is no hell so sunken, no heaven so steep,
Where I should not seek you and find you and keep.

Now you are round and soft, and sweet as a rose;
Not a stain on my spotless one, white as the snows.

If some day you came to me heavy with sin,
I, your mother, would run to the door and let you in.

I would wash you white again with my tears and my grief,
Body of mine and soul of mine, till you found relief.

Though you had sinned all sins there are 'twixt east and west,
You should find my arms wide for you, your head on my breast.

Child, if I were in heaven and you were in hell,—
Angels white as my spotless one stumbled and fell,—

I would leave the fields of God and Queen Mary's feet,
Straight to the heart of hell would go seeking my sweet.

God, mayhap, would turn Him at sound of the door;
"Who is it goes out from Me, to come back no more?"

Then the blessed Mary would say from her throne:
"Son, 'tis a mother goes to hell, seeking her own.

"Body of mine and Soul of mine, born of me,—
Thou who wert once little Jesus beside my knee,—

"It is so that mothers are made: Thou madest them so.
Body of mine and Soul of mine, do I not know?"

(1911)

THE MAKING OF BIRDS

KATHARINE TYNAN

God made Him birds in a pleasant humor;
Tired of planets and suns was He.
He said, "I will add a glory to summer,
Gifts for my creatures banished from Me!"

He had a thought and it set Him smiling,
Of the shape of a bird and its glancing head,
Its dainty air and its grace beguiling:
"I will make feathers," the Lord God said.

He made the robin: He made the swallow;
His deft hands moulding the shape to His mood,
The thrush and lark and the finch to follow,
And laughed to see that His work was good.

He who has given men gift of laughter,
Made in His image; He fashioned fit
The blink of the owl and the stork thereafter,
The little wren and the long-tailed tit.

He spent in the making His wit and fancies;
The wing-feathers He fashioned them strong;
Deft and dear as daisies and pansies,
He crowned His work with the gift of song.

"Dearlings," He said, "make songs for my praises!"
He tossed them loose to the sun and wind,
Airily sweet as pansies and daisies;
He taught them to build a nest to their mind.

The dear Lord God of His glories weary—
Christ our Lord had the heart of a boy—
Made Him birds in a moment merry,
Bade them soar and sing for His joy.

(1912)

THE POOR-HOUSE*

SARA TEASDALE

Hope went by and Peace went by
And would not enter in;
Youth went by and Health went by,
And Love that is their kin.

Those within the house shed tears
On their bitter bread;
Some were old and some were mad,
And some were sick abed.

Gray Death saw the wretched house,
And even he passed by—
"They have never lived," he said,
"They can wait to die."

(1912)

THE HERITAGE†

ABBIE FARWELL BROWN

No matter what my birth may be,
No matter where my lot is cast,
I am the heir in equity
Of all the precious Past.

The art, the science, and the lore
Of all the ages long since dust,
The wisdom of the world in store,
Are mine, all mine in trust.

The beauty of the living earth,
The power of the golden sun,
The Present, whatsoe'er my birth,
I share with every one.

As much as any man am I
The owner of the working day;
Mine are the minutes as they fly
To save or throw away.

And mine the Future to bequeath
Unto the generations new;
I help to shape it with my breath,
Mine as I think or do.

Present and Past my heritage,
The Future laid in my control;—
No matter what my name or age,
I am a Master-soul!

(1912)

THE BUILDING OF SPRINGFIELD*

NICHOLAS VACHEL LINDSAY

[The poet here treats of the possibilities of American prairie-towns of the Middle West, speaking especially for his own city of Springfield, Illinois.]

Let not our town be large—remembering
That little Athens was the Muses' home,
That Oxford rules the heart of London still,
That Florence gave the Renaissance to Rome.

Record it for the grandson of your son—
A city is not builded in a day:
Our little town cannot complete her soul
Till countless generations pass away.

Now let each child be joined as to a church
To her perpetual hopes, each man ordained;
Let every street be made a reverent aisle
Where music grows, and beauty is unchained.

Let Science and Machinery and Trade
Be slaves of her, and make her all in all—
Building against our blatant restless time
An unseen, skilful, mediæval wall.

Let every citizen be rich toward God.
Let Christ, the beggar, teach divinity,—
Let no man rule who holds his money dear.
Let this, our city, be our luxury.

We should build parks that students from afar
Would choose to starve in, rather than go home—
Fair little squares, with Phidian[1] ornament—
Food for the spirit, milk and honeycomb.

Songs shall be sung by us in that good day—
Songs we have written—blood within the rhyme
Beating, as when old England still was glad,
The purple, rich, Elizabethan time.

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† Reprinted from "Songs of Sixpence," by special permission from the author.

[1] *Phidian.* Worthy of Phidias, the great Greek sculptor.

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Say, is my prophecy too fair and far?
I only know, unless her faith be high,
The soul of this our Nineveh is doomed,
Our little Babylon will surely die.

Some city on the breast of Illinois
No wiser and no better at the start,
By faith shall rise redeemed,—by faith shall rise
Bearing the western glory in her heart.

The genius of the Maple, Elm, and Oak,
The secret hidden in each grain of corn—
The glory that the prairie angels sing
At night when sons of Life and Love are born—

Born but to struggle, squalid and alone,
Broken and wandering in their early years;
When will they make our dusty streets their goal,
Within our attics hide their sacred tears?

When will they start our vulgar blood athrill
With living language—words that set us free?
When will they make a path of beauty clear
Between our riches and our liberty?

We must have many Lincoln-hearted men—
A city is not builded in a day—
And they must do their work, and come and go
While countless generations pass away.

(1913)

PANAMA HYMN*

WENDELL PHILLIPS STAFFORD

[On the opening of the Panama Canal.]

We join to-day the East and West,
The stormy and the tranquil seas.
O Father, be the bridal blest!
The earth is on her knees.

Thou, Thou didst give our hand the might
To hew the hemisphere in twain
And level for these waters bright
The mountain with the main.

In freedom let the great ships go
On freedom's errand, sea to sea,—
The oceans rise, the hills bend low,
Servants of liberty.

The nations here shall flash through foam
And paint their pennons with the sun,
Till every harbor is a home
And all the flags are one.

We join to-day the East and West,
The stormy and the tranquil seas.
O Father, be the bridal blest!
Earth waits it on her knees.

(1913)

GOETHALS†

PERCY MACKAYE

[On the directing builder of the Panama Canal.]

A man went down to Panama
Where many a man had died
To slit the sliding mountains
And lift the eternal tide:
A man stood up in Panama,
And the mountains stood aside.

The Power that wrought the tide and peak
Wrought mightier the seer;
And the One who made the isthmus
He made the engineer,
And the good God he made Goethals
To cleave the hemisphere.

The reek of fevered ages rose
From poisoned jungle and strand,
Where the crumbling wrecks of failure
Lay sunk in the torrid sand—
Derelicts of old desperate hopes
And venal contraband:

Till a mind glowed white through the yellow mist
And purged the poison-mould,
And the wrecks rose up in labor,
And the fevers' knell was tolled,
And the keen mind cut the world-divide,
Untarnished by world gold:

For a poet wrought in Panama,
With a continent for his theme,
And he wrote with flood and fire
To forge a planet's dream,
And the derricks rang his dithyrambs
And his stanzas roared in steam.

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But the poet's mind it is not his
Alone, but a million men's:
Far visions of lonely dreamers
Meet there, as in a lens,
And lightnings, pent by stormy time,
Leap through, with flame intense.

So from our age three giants loom
To vouch man's venturous soul:
Amundsen on his ice-peak,
And Peary from his pole,
And midway, where the oceans meet,
Goethals—beside *his* goal:

Where old Balboa bent his gaze
He leads the liners through,
And the Horn that tossed Magellan
Bellows a far halloo,
For where the navies never sailed
Steamed Goethals and his crew.

So nevermore the tropic routes
Need poleward warp and veer,
But on through the Gates of Goethals
The steady keels shall steer,
Where the tribes of man are led toward peace
By the prophet-engineer.

(1914)

INVOCATION *

WENDELL PHILLIPS STAFFORD

O Thou whose equal purpose runs
In drops of rain or streams of suns,
And with a soft compulsion rolls
The green earth on her snowy poles;
O Thou who keepest in Thy ken
The times of flowers, the dooms of men,
Stretch out a mighty wing above—
Be tender to the land we love!

If all the huddlers from the storm
Have found her hearthstone wide and warm;
If she has made men free and glad,
Sharing, with all, the good she had;
If she has blown the very dust
From her bright balance to be just,
Oh, spread a mighty wing above—
Be tender to the land we love!

When in the dark eternal tower
The star-clock strikes her trial hour,
And for her help no more avail
Her sea-blue shield, her mountain mail,
But sweeping wide, from Gulf to Lakes,
The battle on her forehead breaks,
Throw Thou a thunderous wing above—
Be lightning for the land we love!

(1914)

THE GAOLER

HELEN GRAY CONE

To be free, to be alone,
Is a joy I have not known.

To a keeper who never sleeps
I was given at the hour of birth
By the governors of earth;
And so well his watch he keeps,
Though I leave no sleight untried,
That he will not quit my side.

How often, in bygone years,
I have passioned, and sworn with tears
That I loathed him and all his ways!
He is silent; he smiles; he stays.

When I close my eyes at night,
His face is my latest sight.
That dark face is mine own!
He walks in my dreams at will;
When I wake, he is with me still.
To be free, to be alone,
Is a joy that I have not known.

I have cried to the winds, the sea,
"Oh, help me, for ye are free!"
I have thought to escape away,
But his hand on my shoulder lay.
From the hills and the lifting stars
He has borne me back to bars;
With the spell of my murmured name
He has captived and kept me tame.

It is whispered that he and I
In a single hour shall die,
As we were born, 'tis said.
I shall lie in selfless peace;
For him, too, is surcease,
Rest, and a quiet bed.
Self bindeth not the dead.

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Somewhat otherwise I believe;
For a hope is astir in me
That when consciousness one day fills
With a splendor I scarce conceive,—
More than the winds and sea,
More than the stars and hills,—
I indeed shall escape away
Forever in that great day;
I shall have no heed to give
Unto aught that would call me back:
He shall pass like the sunrise rack,
He shall vanish; but I shall live!

(1914)

Poet thinks about poetry

TREES *

JOYCE KILMER

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed
Against the sweet earth's flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

(1914)

composing limitations of poet sees it, Tree a poem of nature

THE LOOK †

SARA TEASDALE

Strephon kissed me in the spring,
  Robin in the fall,
But Colin only looked at me
  And never kissed at all.

Strephon's kiss was lost in jest,
  Robin's lost in play,
But the kiss in Colin's eyes
  Haunts me night and day.

(1914)

MILK FOR THE CAT

HAROLD MONRO

When the tea is brought at five o'clock,
And all the neat curtains are drawn with care,
The little black cat with bright green eyes
Is suddenly purring there.
At first she pretends, having nothing to do,
She has come in merely to blink by the grate,
But, though tea may be late or the milk may be sour,
She is never late.

And presently her agate eyes
Take a soft large milky haze,
And her independent casual glance
Becomes a stiff, hard gaze.

Then she stamps her claws or lifts her ears,
Or twists her tail and begins to stir,
Till suddenly all her lithe body becomes
One breathing, trembling purr.

The children eat and wriggle and laugh;
The two old ladies stroke their silk:
But the cat is grown small and thin with desire,
Transformed to a creeping lust for milk.

The white saucer like some full moon descends
At last from the clouds of the table above;
She sighs and dreams and thrills and glows,
Transfigured with love.

She nestles over the shining rim,
Buries her chin in the creamy sea;
Her tail hangs loose; each drowsy paw
Is doubled under each bending knee.

A long, dim ecstasy holds her life;
Her world is an infinite shapeless white,
Till her tongue has curled the last holy drop;
Then she sinks back into the night,

Draws and dips her body to heap
Her sleepy nerves in the great arm-chair,
Lies defeated and buried deep
Three or four hours unconscious there.

(1914)

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THE LITTLE BOY AND THE LOCOMOTIVE*

BENJAMIN R. C. LOW

The Little Boy to the Locomotive

Big iron horse with lifted head,
Panting beneath the station shed,
You are my dearest dream come true;—
I love my Dad; I worship you!
Your noble heart is filled with fire;
For all your toil, you never tire;
And though you're saddled-up in steel,
Somewhere, inside, I *know* you feel.

All night in dreams when you pass by,
You breathe out stars that fill the sky,
And now, when all my dreams are true,
I hardly dare come close to you.

The Locomotive to the Little Boy

Boy, whose little confiding hand
Your father holds, why do you stand
Staring in wonderment at me,—
Poor thing of iron that I be?

Your unsophisticated eyes
Are full of beautiful surprise;
And oh, how wonderful you are,
You little, golden morning-star!

Poor thing of iron that I be,
A mortal man imagined me;
But you—you drop of morning dew—
God and his heaven are globed in you.

(1915)

THE HOUSE OF CHRISTMAS

GILBERT K. CHESTERTON

There fared a mother driven forth
Out of an inn to roam;
In the place where she was homeless
All men are at home.
The crazy stable close at hand,
With shaking timber and shifting sand,
Grew a stronger thing to abide and stand
Than the square stones of Rome.

For men are homesick in their homes,
And strangers under the sun,
And they lay their heads in a foreign
land
Whenever the day is done.
Here we have battle and blazing eyes,
And chance and honor and high surprise,
But our homes are under miraculous skies
Where the yule tale was begun.

A Child in a foul stable,
Where the beasts feed and foam;
Only where He was homeless
Are you and I at home;
We have hands that fashion and heads
that know,
But our hearts we lost—how long ago!
In a place no chart nor ship can show
Under the sky's dome.

This world is wild as an old wives' tale,
And strange the plain things are;
The earth is enough and the air is enough
For our wonder and our war;
But our rest is as far as the fire-drake
swings,
And our peace is put in impossible things
Where clashed and thundered unthinkable
wings
Round an incredible star.

To an open house in the evening
Home shall men come,
To an older place than Eden
And a taller town than Rome.
To the end of the way of the wandering
star,
To the things that cannot be and that are,
To the place where God was homeless
And all men are at home.

(1915)

THE ENGLISH TONGUE

LEWIS WORTHINGTON SMITH

Words that have tumbled and tossed from
the Avon and Clyde
On to where Indus and Ganges pour
down to the tide.
Words that have lived, that have felt,
that have gathered and grown.
Words! Is it nothing that no other
people have known
Speech of such myriad voices, so full and
so free,
Song by the fireside and crash of the
thunders at sea?

---

* Reprinted from "The House That Was" by special permission from the author and John Lane.

Weight of the Teuton upborne by the joy of the Celt,
Grace from the halls where the courtiers of Normandy knelt,
Easy precision that plays through the laughter of France,
Mysteries of dim Irish fairylands thronged in the dance;—
All of the moods of the world have been caught and been sung,
Changed to its substance, the final invincible tongue.

Words! They are symbols, perhaps, but the things that we live
Keep in their closure; the joys we can take and can give
Narrow themselves to our speech, and the life of the race
Holds to the scope of the lexicon. Idle is place,
Power, and the marching of armies, if those they enthrall
Thrill to no word-glow together, no cry and no call.

Words! They are sympathies, flotsam caught up from the waves,
Passions and tempests of living that only love saves.
Words! They are insights and tremblings of earth made divine,
Swift revelations that melt all of mine into thine.
Words! They are human outreachings to know and believe,
Throbbings of man to his fellows, to give and receive.

Speech is the conqueror sureliest holding his reign.
English they talk in Manila, forgetful of Spain,
English in India, Africa, Van Diemen's Land,
English along the St. Lawrence, the Nile, Rio Grande.
Out of its fullness come friendliness, peace, and content,
Loves of the hearth and the council when hatreds are spent.

Words! English words! They are circling the earth with their power.
Kinships spring up where they march; law is born as their dower;
Guns shall be silent before them and war-lords give way,
Yielding to man in his manhood their blood-purchased sway.
Petty, provincial, and barbarous aims shall be flung
Far to the deeps in the track of the conquering tongue.

(1915)

NOD

WALTER DE LA MARE

Softly along the road of evening,
  In a twilight dim with rose,
Wrinkled with age, and drenched with dew,
  Old Nod the shepherd goes.

His drowsy flock streams on before him,
  Their fleeces charged with gold,
To where the sun's last beam leans low
  On Nod the shepherd's fold.

The hedge is quick and green with briar,
  From their sand the conies creep;
And all the birds that fly in heaven
  Flock singing home to sleep.

His lambs outnumber a noon's roses,
  Yet, when night's shadows fall,
His blind old sheep-dog, Slumber-soon,
  Misses not one of all.

His are the quiet steeps of dreamland,
  The waters of no-more-pain,
His ram's bell rings 'neath an arch of stars,
  "Rest, rest, and rest again."

(1916)

THE SACRAMENT OF FIRE*

JOHN OXENHAM

Kneel always when you light a fire!
Kneel reverently, and thankful be
For God's unfailing charity;
And on the ascending flame inspire
A little prayer, that shall upbear

---

* From a volume entitled "The Fiery Cross," 1918. Reprinted by permission of Geo. H. Doran Company, publishers.

The incense of your thankfulness
For this sweet grace
Of warmth and light;
For here again is sacrifice
For your delight.

Within the wood,
That lived a joyous life
Through sunny days and rainy days
And winter storms and strife;—
Within the peat
That drank the sweet,
The moorland sweet
Of bracken, whin, and sweet bell-heather,
And knew the joy of gold gorse feather
Flaming like love in wintriest weather,

While snug below, in sun and snow,
It heard the beat of the padding feet
Of foal and dam, and ewe and lamb,
And the stamp of old bell-wether;—
Within the coal,
Where forests lie entombed,
Oak, elm, and chestnut, beech, and red pine bole;—
God shrined His sunshine, and enwombed
For you these stores of light and heat,
Your life-joys to complete.
These all have died that you might live;
Yours now the high prerogative
To loose their long captivities,
And through these new activities
A wider life to give.

Kneel always when you light a fire!
Kneel reverently,
And grateful be
For God's unfailing charity!

(1918)

THE DAWN OF PEACE

ALFRED NOYES

[This poem, written before the Great War of 1914-1918, seemed during the years of that struggle to represent a forgotten hope; yet the editor had intended to print it at the close of this volume, even if the volume had appeared while the war still went on, as a prophecy of the day toward which humanity continues to strive.]

Yes—"on our brows we feel the breath
Of dawn," though in the night we wait!
An arrow is in the heart of Death,
A God is at the doors of Fate!
The spirit that moved upon the Deep
Is moving through the minds of men:
The nations feel it in their sleep,
A change has touched their dreams again.
Voices, confused and faint, arise,
Troubling their hearts from East and West.
A doubtful light is in their skies,
A gleam that will not let them rest:
The dawn, the dawn is on the wing,
The stir of change on every side,
Unsignaled as the approach of Spring,
Invincible as the hawthorn-tide.

Have ye not heard it, far and nigh,
The voice of France across the dark,
And all the Atlantic with one cry
Beating the shores of Europe?—hark!
Then—if ye will—uplift your word
Of cynic wisdom! Once again
Tell us He came to bring a sword,—
Tell us He lived and died in vain.

Say that we dream! Our dreams have woven
Truths that out-face the burning sun:
The lightnings, that we dreamed, have cloven
Time, space, and linked all lands in one!
Dreams! But their swift celestial fingers
Have knit the world with threads of steel,
Till no remotest island lingers
Beyond the world's one Commonweal.

Dreams are they? But ye cannot stay them,
Or thrust the dawn back for one hour!
Truth, Love, and Justice, if ye slay them,
Return with more than earthly power:
Strive, if ye will, to seal the fountains
That send the Spring thro' leaf and spray:
Drive back the sun from the eastern mountains,
Then—bid this mightier movement stay.

It is the Dawn of Peace! The nations
From East to West have heard a cry,—
"Though all earth's blood-red generations
By hate and slaughter climbed thus high,
Here—on this height—still to aspire,
One only path remains untrod,
One path of love and peace climbs higher!
Make straight that highway for our God."

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